

# 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

2020.7.17



## Museum of the people, by the people, for the people

2020.7.18 (Sat) -  
2021.3.21 (Sun)

### An exhibition where you take the lead to consider the future direction of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

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| Exhibition Title | Museum of the people, by the people, for the people  |
| Period           | Saturday, July 18, 2020 - Sunday, March 21, 2021   |
| Hours            | 10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)   |
| Venue            | Design Gallery, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa  |
| Closed           | Mondays (except Aug 10, Sep 21, Nov 23, Jan 11), Aug 11 (Tue), Sep 23 (Wed),<br>Nov 24 (Tue), Dec 29-Jan 1, Jan 12 (Tue) |
| Admission        | Free   |
| Inquiries        | 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Tel: +81-(0)76-220-2800  |
| Organized by     | 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa<br>(Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)                 |

Media Contact

#### 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

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**About  
the Exhibition**

In October 2019, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. Located in the heart of the city of Kanazawa, over the past fifteen years the museum has pursued its activities with the goal, among others, of working with local citizens to create a participation-oriented museum that adds vitality to the community.

Over time, people have perhaps grown less conscious of the presence of the museum than when it first appeared, looking so fresh and novel. The past fifteen years have also seen some dramatic changes in the museum's setting, that is, in the city of Kanazawa. In particular, while the museum as a now-popular tourist spot attracts a large number of visitors from out of town and overseas, one suspects the pressure of this relentless tourist tide may have gradually detached it somewhat from the everyday lives of Kanazawa locals. Fifteen years on, this exhibition offers a fresh opportunity for "us" to think about "our museum." How does a museum conceived with the aim of being created alongside citizens, and revitalizing the community, appear in the eyes of Kanazawa people today? And what vision do they expect it to paint for the future? This exhibition aims to address, from various angles, the idea of "our museum" now.

"Museum of the people, by the people, for the people" will be the creation not of artists, but the voices of those same local people, and museum visitors, who take center stage at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. A participatory exhibition, it will invite people to think about what the museum has been so far, and what it could be in the future, via interviews, and a series of seminars for Kanazawa residents. We hope it will encourage those who come to 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, and those yet to make its acquaintance, to start thinking of it as "our museum," and for the museum, for its part, to ponder its future direction by taking on board the views expressed via the exhibition.



Photo: WATANABE Osamu

### Message from the curator

“What we think of as ‘public’ is not really public at all.”

I was once told this by my boss during a Museum Studies internship overseas. In other words, it pays to remember that no matter how much we as museum staff may view the things we organize as beneficial to society, the public on the receiving end may not always see them the same way. Which means that to engage in truly meaningful museum activities, museum staff should be listening constantly to the “public” that make the museum, and from time to time immersing themselves in those same voices. Art museums overseas have dedicated departments for this very purpose, and serving as an intern in such a place is what shaped me as a curator. The words quoted above have helped sustain me in that role ever since.

Since coming to 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, I have posed various questions of the local community via many different projects, and learned a great deal from the thoughts shared therein. Needless to say, such experiences form the foundation of what we do at the museum today. The truth is though, that there are still many people we have yet to meet. They too are potential members of the “public” of a public art museum such as ours, and as such, we need to listen to what they have to say as well.

This exhibition is an opportunity for us to tune in to 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa’s public, including these individuals. The artists in this exhibition are that very “public,” and over the next nine months or so, we will be endeavoring, with their help, to gradually put together an exhibition. The aim is to consider what we can do to help both those who come to the museum often, and those who do not, to think of it as “our museum,” and construct the exhibition accordingly.

A wider debate on the definition of what constitutes a museum has been underway for some time. However, the fact that we as a museum exist alongside our public is unlikely to change, and nor should it, in my view. We anticipate this exhibition will also serve as an excellent reminder of this for us at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.

TACHIBANA Yumiko (“Museum of the people, by the people, for the people” curator)

### Exhibition highlights

#### **A chance for “us” to think about “our museum”**

Fifteen years on, to what extent has 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa’s stated goal, “to create a participation-oriented museum along with citizens and revitalize the community,” a symbolic feature of the museum, penetrated the local community and achieved a transformation? The true significance of this exhibition lies in its attempt to reflect on the museum’s journey to date from the viewpoint of none other than local residents, question the current state of affairs, and plot a future path for the museum.

#### **An exhibition led not by artists, but the community**

Rather than being artist-led, so to speak, this exhibition takes the form of a participatory project shaped over time by local residents, and visitors. Grass-roots views on the museum’s past, present and future will be solicited as opportunities arise, through seminars aimed at the local community scheduled over the next nine months or so, and from visitors to the Museum, and presented in video, audio, and text format, in a gallery space reflecting the day-to-day process of the discussion as it unfolds, that nimbly invites visitors into the arena of these thoughts.

#### **Whose museum is it? The challenge of being a truly “public” art museum**

Achieving a genuinely “public” quality could be described as a fundamental issue for all public facilities. Confronting the essence of this issue head on, this exhibition will also listen to the opinions of those yet to make our acquaintance, in what will constitute the starting point in a lengthy process of creating, through dialogue, a truly “public” art museum that is a place for everyone.

**Associated  
“Museum  
Seminar”**

To reflect on the museum to date, and plot out its future, we will hold a series of community seminars contemplating the idea of “our museum” from different angles. Young Kanazawa residents, which will shape our museum together for the next decades, will be invited to attend these seminars.

**Date/time:** Third Saturday each month July– November from 19:00 (except for October’s workshop. See below for dates)

**Venue:** Meeting Room 1 and others, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

**Target:** Kanazawa residents, ages 20–39

**Admission:** Free

**Participants:** 10

\*Program content is subject to change.



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**Seminar 1 (July 18): Thinking about the museum**

Join us for a fresh look at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, fifteen years on. Over the past fifteen years, just as many of you have grown, or even reached adulthood, we too have been getting on with our various activities, changing little by little along the way. You may have found some of these changes better for you personally than others. In this first seminar we will be looking at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa to date, seeing what has worked for you, and what has not. As well as discussing the meaning of holding an exhibition like this now, and the meaning of thinking about art museums together, this will be an opportunity for us to join you in thinking about 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.

Facilitator: TAKAHASHI Ritsuko (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Host: TACHIBANA Yumiko (“Museum of the people, by the people, for the people” curator)

**Seminar 2 (August 15): Taking part in the museum**

In this seminar we extend an invitation to those who have never been to 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, as we ponder “participation in the art museum” alongside people who go to museums, and people who don’t. This will involve comparing the fundamental reasons why people don’t come to the museum now, and why they do, and sharing thoughts on what 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa must do to become truly a museum for everyone.

Host: TACHIBANA Yumiko (“Museum of the people, by the people, for the people” curator)

**Seminar 3 (September 19): Critiquing the museum**

This seminar will be about critiquing 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. Critiquing is not pointing out the negative side of something, but considering the good and bad, pros and cons, and stating one’s own views, for the sake of progressive debate. What does the museum look like to you right now? Building on the first two seminars, this is an opportunity to think about how we can plot out a dynamic future for the museum.

Guest: Philosophical Practice Arda Coda

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#### **Seminar 4 (October 24/25): Constructing the museum**

Now to try creating your ideal 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa for all. Based on the three seminars to date, you are invited to construct “my 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa” incorporating what you think should be retained of the current museum, and what any future museum will require. We are confident that your individual “21st Century Museums of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa” will offer plenty of suggestions for how the museum should proceed from here.

Guest: SUGANO Keisuke (Assistant Professor, Kanazawa Institute of Technology, Department of Architecture)

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#### **Seminar 5 (November 21): Our museum**

This last seminar will tie together all the previous seminars, and give you the chance to describe to your representative, a 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa curator, your visions for “my 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.” This will be an opportunity to discuss candidly, including with the museum’s director, your thoughts on 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa before and during these seminars, as well as what people should do to continue living alongside the museum, and what we at 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa should do to live alongside you.

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