

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

2021.10.15



FEMINISMS

2021.10.16 (Sat.) -
2022.3.13 (Sun.)

Exhibition Title	FEMINISMS
Period	Saturday, October 16, 2021 – Sunday, March 13, 2022
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays) *Ticket sales end 30 minutes before closing
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Galleries 11, 12 and 14
Closed	Mondays (except November 1 and November 22, 2021, and January 3 and January 10, 2022); November 24; December 29 – January 1; January 4; January 11
Number of exhibiting artists	9 (number of works: 23)
Admission	Adults: ¥1,200 (¥1,000) / Students: ¥800 (¥600) 18 and under: ¥400 (¥300) / 65 and over: ¥1,000 *Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20 people or more and web tickets *Tickets for this exhibition include admission to the concurrently held “Countermeasures Against Awkward Discourses: From the Perspective of Third Wave Feminism” (October 16, 2021 – March 13, 2022). *Tickets also include admission (same day only) to “Collection Exhibition 1: Inner Cosmology” (until November 3) and “Collection Exhibition 2: BLUE” (November 20, 2021 – March 13, 2022).
Timed-entry tickets	Web tickets for specific days/times go on sale at 10:00, September 27, 2021 Web tickets for specific days/times are available on museum website (https://www.kanazawa21.jp)
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
In Cooperation with	Slacktide Co., Ltd.; TOKI CORPORATION
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**About
the Exhibition**

Feminism in Japan from the 1990s onward was linked to popular culture, focused on girls and young women in Europe and the US, and was disseminated through the media. Young women's activities in Japan were also featured in the media, particularly a brand of feminism that became known as the "Girly Movement." However, in Japan's case it cannot be denied that in some ways the movement was less a call for change than it was fodder for the media, turning images of women into objects for consumption. Laws such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1986 and the Basic Act for a Gender Equal Society of 1999 were passed and a gender-equal society seemed to be on the way, but in reality there remained a pervasive sense of incongruity between the individual and society, as seen in the marital and family systems, social norms of heterosexuality, and conventions of femininity and masculinity.

Now, in the 2020s, social changes are stirring as small voices raising dissent connect through the Internet and gain strength. Feminism, which was thought of as only for women, is extending a helping hand to anyone who feels out of place in society. In recent years, the word has begun to be used in the plural form: feminisms. Ways of thinking about and understanding feminism differ depending on people's generation and era, nation and ethnic group, environment and values. The message of pluralistic feminisms is the importance and necessity of members of society mutually acknowledging diverse ways of thinking. In this exhibition, works by nine artists, each with their own perspective, offer a window into expressions of feminism in Japan, and how artists perceive gender, the body, society, and what lies beyond.

**Features of
the Exhibition**

Feminisms – Plural – Explored Through Art Since the 1990s

As the title *FEMINISMS* indicates, the theme of this exhibition is feminism in plural form, and various interpretations are presented through a wide range of Japanese artworks from the 1990s onward. In today's digital society, gender, the body, and perceptions of sexuality are becoming more diverse and individualized, and feminist concepts are being expressed from the perspectives of all kinds of people who feel discomfort with societal norms. This exhibition focuses on feminist thought and its shifting, ongoing evolution, and explores diverse perceptions and interpretations through contemporary art.

Gender and Society in Japan as Seen by Contemporary Artists

The exhibition features nine primarily Japan-based contemporary artists whose keen observations and abundant sensitivity have kept them at the forefront of the art scene since the 1990s and in the 21st century. They work in a wide range of media including painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, video, and installations. Here, the viewer is invited to break free of preconceptions and reclaim the innate freedom of the body and mind through works that question relationships between the body and the inner spirit, explore the essence of gender differences and sexuality, and re-examine how gender and identity affect individuals and the society that surrounds them.

Perspectives on the Future, Connecting to the Next Generation

With the theme of *FEMINISMS*, this exhibition consists of gallery spaces co-created by the artists, presenting flexible, diverse, and original ways of thinking about the contemporary body and sexuality, seeking to connect to the next generation by opening up possibilities for new interpretations not bound by existing social norms, institutions, or values. Underlying this endeavor is a warm and gentle gaze fixed on a future society in which physical differences and individuality are accepted and people coexist harmoniously. We hope that this exhibition, firmly rooted in the foundation of feminism that has been built over so many years, will serve as a bridge to a future in which individuals can coexist by celebrating rather than emphasizing differences.

Exhibiting artists
 (in Japanese phonetic order)

AOKI Chie	KIMURA Ryoko
USUI Yui	NISHIYAMA Minako
ENDO Mai	MORI Eiki
ENDO Mai × MOMOSE Aya	Yu-KI YUKI
KAZAMA Sachiko	

**About
the artists**
AOKI Chie

Born 1981 in Gifu. Aoki's BODY series has the primal theme of confrontation with the subconscious. The deep, lustrous jet-black mirrored surfaces of her *urushi* (lacquer) works are reminiscent of smooth female skin, and the figures fused with abstract masses seems to be truly alive, beckoning the viewer's awareness into the interior of the *urushi*. They express the existence of human beings who live powerfully and vigorously while bearing the burden of complex emotions. Major solo exhibitions include *Shikkoku no Shintai*, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art (2017).



AOKI Chie, *BODY 20-1*, 2020
 Courtesy of Sokyo Gallery
 photo: IMAMURA Yujii

USUI Yui

Born 1980 in Tokyo. Usui interprets events and history that have been forgotten or overlooked by society through in-depth research, creating works that generate relationality and critique through familiar techniques and materials such as handicrafts and fabric that have traditionally been regarded as "women's work." She won the VOCA Award in 2018. Major solo exhibitions include *shadow work*, Oyama City Kurumaya Museum of Art (Tochigi, 2016).



USUI Yui, *shadow of a coin*, 2013-2018
 Private collection
 photo : KOGURE Shinya

ENDO Mai

Born 1984 in Hyogo. As an actor and visual artist, Endo's playful practice incorporates talking, DIY, and acting through the vehicle of her body. She focuses on the marital system and sexual and gender norms, and frequently collaborates with others. Major exhibitions include *Rules?*, 21_21DESIGN SIGHT (Tokyo, 2021). In 2018, she and MARUYAMA Mika founded the queer/feminist art zine *Multiple Spirits*. They investigate relationships of influence between Japanese *shojo* (girls') culture and queer/feminist activism, and held the exhibition *When It Waxes and Wanes* in Vienna in 2019.



ENDO Mai, *I AM NOT A FEMINIST!*, 2017/2021
Creating the marriage contract with MORI Eiki
at the Goethe-Institut Tokyo
Film still : FUJIKAWA Takashi, KOYANAGI Tao

ENDO Mai × MOMOSE Aya

MOMOSE Aya

Born 1988 in Tokyo. Momose re-examines asymmetries of seeing and being seen, speaking and being spoken about in the moving image, creating video and performance works that explore divergences of voice and body and question social structures and norms centered on the visual. Recent major screenings of works include the *13th Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Vision: PROJECTS: Retouch Me Not*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (2021).



ENDO Mai x MOMOSE Aya, *Love Condition*, 2020

KAZAMA Sachiko

Born 1972 in Tokyo. Kazama's black-and-white woodcut prints shed light on dark corners of the present and its underlying history, drawing on her original research into online discourse and old documents and materials, and capturing the past, present, and future in a single frame. Her comical and cynical works reflect the mentality not of a member of society, but of an outside observer lacking a fixed identity. She won the Tokyo Contemporary Art Award 2019-2021 in 2019, and her work is in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York (USA).



Left : KAZAMA Sachiko, *Der Lungenwald-LUNGENWALD*, 2021
woodcut print (Japanese paper, oil ink), acrylic
photo: TAKAHASHI Kenji
©Sachiko Kazama, Courtesy of Tokyo Arts and Space

Right : KAZAMA Sachiko, *Der Lungenwald-LINGENBAUM*, 2021
woodcut print (Japanese paper, oil ink),
photo: TAKAHASHI Kenji
©Sachiko Kazama, Courtesy of Tokyo Arts and Space
Collection of the artist

KIMURA Ryoko

Born 1971 in Kyoto. Interpreting East Asian images of the male figure as *bijinga* (lit. “pictures of beautiful people,” but traditionally referring to paintings of women), Kimura paints with a perspective that encompasses romance, love, and the sexual gaze from a heterosexual female standpoint. She explores the possibilities of contemporary Nihonga (Japanese -style painting), working in traditional styles such as yamato-e, Kano School painting, and hand-painted ukiyo-e. Major exhibitions include *Imayo: Japan’s New Traditionalists*, Honolulu Museum of Art (USA, 2016) and *Shoto Museum of Art* (Tokyo, 2017).



KIMURA Ryoko, *Beauty of My Dish – Banquet of Mermaids*, 2005
Private collection

NISHIYAMA Minako

Born 1965 in Hyogo. Since the early 1990s, Nishiyama has revealed relationships between gender and consumption in Japanese culture by exaggerating visual tropes of *shojo* (girls’) culture such as the color pink, cuteness, and fragility. Major exhibitions include *Knit Café In My Room By Mitsuharu Hirose and Minako Nishiyama*, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Ishikawa, 2009). Her work is in the collection of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa.



NISHIYAMA Minako, ♡ *Erica’s Palpitant Teleppon Club* ♡, 1992
photo: NISHIMURA Koichi

MORI Eiki

Born 1976 in Ishikawa. Mori works in various media including photography, video, performance, and text, addressing the subjects of sexuality and gender differences. He presents his own questioning of the present-day family in visual form through observation and participation, distilling social issues with a light and delicate touch. He won the Kimura Ihei Award in 2014. Exhibitions include *Shibboleth—I peep the ocean through a hole of the torn cardigan*, KEN NAKAHASHI (Tokyo, 2020).



MORI Eiki, *Untitled from the series of Family Regained*, 2017
© Eiki Mori, Courtesy of KEN NAKAHASHI

Yu-Ki YUKI

From Shizuoka. While engaging with aspects of Japanese otaku culture such as cosplay, pop idols, and BL (“boys’ love,” manga depicting male same-sex romance primarily targeted at women), Yuki focuses on filters (vessels for desire) that exist in the interzone between self and society, between fiction and reality, endeavoring to question and dismantle constrictive two-way relationships. She won the 21st Taro Okamoto Award for Contemporary Art in 2018. Major exhibitions include *Listen to Her Song*, The University Art Museum, Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo, 2020).



Yu-KI Yuki, *For your own good,*, 2020

Related event

Information will be posted on the museum website at a later date.

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