

Information concerning the Spring 2019 exhibition at the Towada Art Center

Where Is Chiiki Art? Project

Stranger Than Fiction

Taking creation beyond location

Saturday 13 April 2019 – Sunday 1 September 2019



Fig. 1 | Exhibition Poster

Many artists throughout Japan are currently involved in collaborating with regional communities, something that has come to be known as *chiiki art*. Since last year, the Towada Art Center's *Where Is Chiiki Art?* project has attempted to understand the diversity, challenges, and possibilities of these collaborations. An outcome of that project, this exhibition will showcase—both in and outside of the museum—new works by three artists engaged in *chiiki art*: Jun Kitazawa, Nadegata Instant Party, and Hiroshi Fuji.

We hope you will join us to see how these artists fill the community with the fibs and fabrications that are often the tools of the trade in art in order to bring a vividness and color to reality that is stranger than fiction.

Exhibition Highlights

1. Indonesian cycle rickshaws come to Towada (Jun Kitazawa)
2. A VR artwork created in collaboration with people in Towada (Nadegata Instant Party)
3. An exploration of art and community using an autobiographical novel (Hiroshi Fuji)

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About the Exhibition

Title *Stranger Than Fiction: Taking creation beyond location*

Date Saturday 13 April 2019 – Sunday 1 September 2019

Hours 9:00-17:00 (Last admission 30 minutes before closing)

Closed Mondays
except for National Holidays, in which case the museum is open on the holiday and closed the following Tuesday
*Open 22 April, 30 April, 29 July, 5 August & 13 August

Location Towada Art Center

Admission Exhibition + Permanent Collection: 1,200 yen
Exhibition only: 800 yen
100 yen/ticket discount for groups of 20 or more
High school students and younger: Free

Organized by Towada Art Center, Towada City

Endorsed by To-o Nippo Press, The Daily-Tohoku Shimbun Inc., Aomori Broadcasting Cooperation, Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., & Towada City Board of Education

Planning by Kodama Kanazawa, Mari Satomura, Sayaka Mitome & Yuki Miyata

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About the Artists

Jun Kitazawa

Jun Kitazawa's latest project brings cycle rickshaws from his current base in Indonesia that visitors will be able to ride around town. When these exotic vehicles suddenly appear in Towada—almost like some bug or error—and start to become part of the townscape, history and culture will resonate to transform the everyday life that we've grown accustomed to. Operated in partnership with local citizens, this project will serve as an experiment in community revitalization.

Artist. Born in 1988 in Tokyo. Completed a Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Tokyo University of the Arts. President of Jun Kitazawa Office Yakumo. Kitazawa conceptualizes ways to find and make meaning in a changing society through fieldwork in different countries and regions and collaborative efforts with people from diverse backgrounds. The realization of these efforts is in itself an attempt at artistic practice. From April 2016 to March 2017, he went to Indonesia as a fellow of the Japan Foundation Asia Center. Currently based in Yogyakarta.



Fig. 2 | Portrait of Jun Kitazawa
Photo by CULTURE

Past Works & Projects

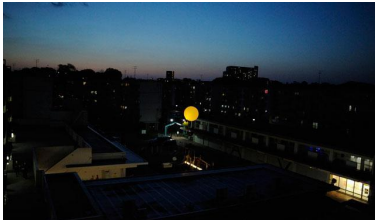


Fig. 3 | Jun Kitazawa, *Sun Self Hotel*, photo by Yuji Ito (reference image)

Sun Self Hotel

Sun Self Hotel turns empty local rooms into hand-made “hotel rooms,” using solar power to generate the electricity needed for one night's accommodation. When guests check into the Sun Self Hotel, greeted by a local volunteer concierge, they must make a tour of the surroundings to collect electricity using a specially designed “Solar Wagon.” After sunset, the electricity guests collect is used to illuminate the *Sun In The Night*, which hangs in the sky. The rest of the electricity is used in the hotel rooms.



Fig. 4 | Jun Kitazawa, *Living Room*, photo by Yuji Ito (reference image)

Living Room

Kitazawa unrolled a carpet inside an empty store and visited nearby houses to ask for unwanted furniture and appliances. Collected items were then placed on the carpet to make the space look like a real living room that could be found in any house in the community. This living room also functioned as a place for local residents to barter; they brought items from their own living rooms and traded them for things from this living room. As more and more items were placed in the open room, people found it comfortable to spend time here. Some sat on the sofa and read books while others watched TV or cooked. The goings-on within the living room changed spontaneously as its interior evolved throughout the bartering process.

Message from the Artist

I first visited Towada from my home in Indonesia in June 2018 and visited a second time in winter after the snow had accumulated. The slight time difference and more than slight temperature difference in Towada made it hard to tell how far I'd traveled, as if I'd lost sense of where I was. Perhaps I'll get used to it after I visit a few more times. In *LOST TERMINAL*, a new project created for this exhibition, I will introduce to Towada some of the different vehicles that are found on the streets of Indonesia for people to ride and use in order to bring new perspectives to the city. The Towada Art Center will become the terminal from which these vehicles come and go, and I hope that you will enjoy exploring the city aboard these exotic creations. Not quite Japan and not quite Indonesia, you may feel as if you've been transported to some distant, unknown place. But just as I felt while visiting Towada, as spring turns into summer, perhaps these exotic vehicles will begin to feel not so exotic after all. I look forward to seeing where we eventually arrive.

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Nadegata Instant Party

(Toru Nakazaki + Daisuke Yamashiro + Tomoko Noda)

Nadegata Instant Party is a legendary art unit that, since its formation in 2006, has involved residents in instigating unexpected events in local communities throughout Japan. In this exhibition, they will collaborate with local residents to complete a new experiential virtual reality (VR) project. Participants will enjoy the spontaneous outcomes, which will be presented as artworks that no one could have foreseen.

An offbeat unit that flouts convention, Nadegata Instant Party consists of three members: Toru Nakazaki, Daisuke Yamashiro, and Tomoko Noda. Art collective started on 2013. They are committed to serving local communities and begin their creative process by producing just the right pretext for that community. In order to accomplish their goals, they involve many participants and create “reality” from a single event. As their pretext becomes reality, they narrate the process with installations, video and performative methodologies, and other mediums.

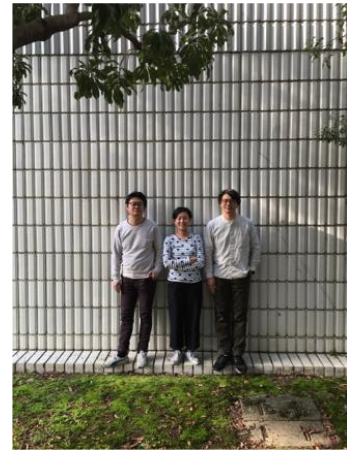


Fig. 5 | Portrait of Nadegata Instant Party (Toru Nakazaki + Daisuke Yamashiro + Tomoko Noda)

Past Works & Projects



24 OUR TELEVISION

A 24-hour-only internet television station created together with a 100-person staff of local Aomori residents. A studio was built inside of the gallery with an amateur crew serving as cameramen, switchers, assistant directors, anchors, and performers. The 24-hour live broadcast was, at the same time, a 24-hour live performance piece and was viewed by more than 8,000 people.

Fig. 6 | Nadegata Instant Party, *24 OUR TELEVISION*, Aomori Contemporary Art Centre ©Nadegata Instant Party (reference image)



Yellow Cake Street

Nadegata Instant Party developed the fictitious legend of a “yellow cake” that had been passed down for generations in Australia. They worked together with local residents and chefs to devise cake recipes as if such a legend actually existed. These recipes became the basis for a limited-time-only cake shop called Yellow Cake Street, which was built into the exhibition space. They also showed a fictional documentary detailing the process. This was Nadegata Instant Party’s first project outside of Japan.

Fig. 7 | Nadegata Instant Party, *Yellow Cake Street*, 2011, *Alternating Currents -Japanese Art After March 2011*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA), Australia ©Nadegata Instant Party (reference image)

Message from the Artists

Since founding Nadegata Instant Party in 2006, we’ve exhibited a number of project-based artworks throughout the country. Each place we visit and every person we meet has a profound impact on each of our works. There have been a number of times when our projects have ended up going so far beyond what we originally envisioned that we became totally engrossed in them, to the point of being ridiculed as “an offbeat unit that puts the cart before the horse.” Suffice it to say, we’re certainly familiar with things becoming “stranger than fiction.” Our latest project, which will debut at the Towada Art Center, is centered around creating virtual realities. We have conceived an experiential work that utilizes image, sound, and space to combine physical and virtual realities right before the visitor’s eye, begging the question—is this fact or fiction? It’s still early on in our project, but the unique character of Towada has begun to reveal itself to us. For the time being, we’ll snack on the large supply of black garlic we’ve been gifted as we continue to put the cart before the horse.

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Hiroshi Fuji

Since the 1980s, Hiroshi Fuji has created social art that he refers to as “operation systems,” which he describes as systems and frameworks that participants voluntarily “install” in society. For this exhibition, Fuji attempts the novelization of a certain artist modeled after his own creative process in collaboration with the Towada Art Center while, at the same time, exhibiting actual traces of this fictional artist’s work. Through one artist’s thought process, we might just get a better understanding of the realm of expression as it relates to region and art and its connection with social and historical trends.

Artist. Born in 1960 Kagoshima, Japan. Graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Kyoto City University of Arts. He has led a colorful career lecturing at the Papua New Guinea National Art School, joining an urban planning group, establishing the Fuji Hiroshi Design and Production Studio, and serving as director of the Towada Art Center. He is now a professor at the Akita University of Art and serves as president of Arts Center Akita. He has been involved in many art projects and has exhibited his work extensively both in Japan and abroad. In 1992, he established the Fuji Hiroshi Design and Production Studio and turned his attention to the community (*chiiki*), employing methodologies that combine collaboration and appropriate technologies in pursuit of ways to elicit artistic expression.



Fig. 8 | Portrait of Hiroshi Fuji
Photo by Kuniya Oyamada

Past Works & Projects



Kaekko

The *Kaekko* project is a system that uses old toys to create a variety of activities in local areas. *Kaekko* operates both nationwide and in countries around the world. Not only does it help children to communicate better, but it adapts to place, eliciting organizer and participant awareness of issues such as education, play, environment, recycling, business district revitalization, community development, and international exchange.

Fig. 9 | Hiroshi Fuji, *Kaekko* project, 2002, Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art (reference image)



Happy Paradises

An installation piece using toys gathered during the *Kaekko* project as material. It was first presented in Nakanoshima during Aqua Metropolis Osaka 2009 and has since been shown both in Japan and abroad.

Fig. 10 | Hiroshi Fuji, *Happy Paradises*, 2015, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (reference image)

Message from the Artist

“You gotta do something more innovative!” That was something Takeshi Shima’s old college friend Reiichi always said. Art students find themselves attracted to artworks of every genre from every country and era. All of them start creating through imitation, but that only gets them so far. At some point, they must create something that has yet to exist in the world. Whether or not they can trade imitation for innovation is the real issue.

Oh, how I miss those days. I myself have long grappled with the issue of creative invention: how can one create something that has never existed before? And I’ve thoroughly enjoyed the process, even at the expense of my family and physical wellbeing. I first visited Towada in 2003 amid my continual efforts to implement systems, spaces, tools, and relationships that help foster the creative process. After hosting the family-oriented event *Kaekko* at the Central Community Center in Towada, I administered a survey about art. As a direct result, the Towada Art Center opened in 2008. Beginning in 2012, I based myself in Towada and was involved in the management of the museum for four years. Plenty of my ideas matured during my time in Towada and Oirase and became challenges for the future. In this exhibition, I want to present the adventures of Takeshi Shima as a novel and miniature three-dimensional picture scroll. Oh, and by the way, who is Takeshi Shima anyways?!

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Related Events

*Content and guests of the events above are subject to change. We update our website regularly, so please check there for the latest information.

Opening Talk

Exhibition artists Jun Kitazawa, Nadegata Instant Party, and Hiroshi Fuji will discuss their works.

Date Saturday 13 April 2019 14:00 – 15:30

Location Towada Art Center Collaborative Space

Admission Free with exhibition ticket

Crosstalk

A panel discussion that considers and explores, from a number of angles, the scope of expression and regionality.

Time 14:00 – 16:00 (14:00 – 16:30 on 28 July)

Location Towada Art Center Collaborative Space

Admission Free with exhibition ticket

Day 1: Sunday 28 July “Beyond the Museum”

Guests

Katsuhiko Hibino Artist / Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts & Professor at the Intermedia Art Department, Tokyo University of the Arts
Masato Nakamura Artist / General Director of 3331 Arts Chiyoda / Associate Professor at the Tokyo University of the Arts
Chieko Kinoshita Art Producer / Associate Professor at the Office for Community-University Co-Creation, Osaka University
Kazuko Koike Director, Towada Art Center

Day 2: Saturday 17 August “Extend the City”

Guests

Junya Yamaide Artist / Director, NPO BEPPU PROJECT
Sakie Takasu Artist / Director, SIDE CORE
Nozomu Ogawa Director, Art Center Ongoing / Director, TERATOTERA

Day 3: Saturday 31 August “Conspire with the Community”

Guests

Ryo Yamazaki Director, studio-L / Community Designer / Social Worker
Jun Kitazawa Exhibiting Artist
Yuki Miyata Outreach Manager, Towada Art Center

Day 4: Sunday 1 September “Where is Chiiki Art?”

Guests

Futoshi Hoshino Scholar & Critic
Kodama Kanazawa Senior Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs, Towada Art Center

Concert by duenn, Nyantora, Shohei Tsuda & Shuntaro Tanikawa

A one-night-only performance featuring: Nyantora, the ambient project of Towada native and former Supercar member Koji Nakamura; Misawa's electronics composer duenn; and contemporary artist Shohei Yasuda. *Poet Shuntaro Tanikawa's performance will be acapella.

Date Saturday 17 August 2019 19:00 – 20:00

Location Towada Art Center Cafe and Rest Space

Admission TBD *Details to be announced on the Towada Art Center website

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About the Artwork



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Fig. 2 | Portrait of Jun Kitazawa
Photo by CULTURE

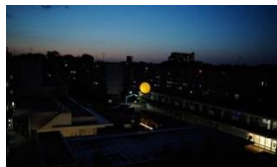


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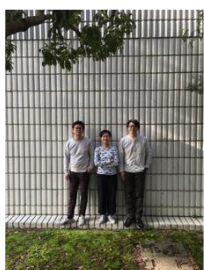


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*Please use the main visual (Fig. 1 on p. 1 of this press release) when posting only one image.

*Please contact the museum to request other images for publication.

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Promotional Artwork

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