

Kunimatsu Kineta: Breathing in Ripples

December 13, 2025 – May 10, 2026

Towada Art Center



A scene from during production using beech wood sourced in Oirase (September 26, 2025, in Towada)
Photo: Oyamada Kuniya

The Towada Art Center is pleased to present *Breathing in Ripples*, the first solo museum exhibition by Hokkaido-based sculptor Kunimatsu Kineta, from Saturday, December 13, 2025, to Sunday, May 10, 2026.

Since the early 2000s, Kunimatsu has been based at the Tobiu Art Community, which is housed in a former elementary school in Tobiu, inland from the town of Shiraoi in south-central Hokkaido. Inspired by trees and their unique shapes formed over many years in the rugged northern landscape, Kunimatsu creates sculptures, paintings, and installations that explore the contours and boundaries found in nature, including horizons, shorelines, mountains, and caves. His process involves cutting, carving, and burning directly onto wooden surfaces and interiors, as well as engaging directly with minerals, snow, and other natural materials, resulting in works that embody a singular, fleeting dialogue between artist and nature.

Since 2009, Kunimatsu has hosted the Tobiu Art Festival at the Tobiu Art Community while working to protect the surrounding forest. Since 2015, under the name Ayoro Laboratory, he has conducted fieldwork exploring the landscape in and around the nearby area known as Ayoro. This exhibition offers a rare opportunity not only to encounter Kunimatsu's most iconic works, but also to experience new creations born from his dialogue with the natural environment of Towada, presented here for the first time. It also highlights the breadth of his practice, from his involvement in the Tobiu Art Community and Ayoro Laboratory to the artistic lineage he shares with his father, sculptor Kunimatsu Asuka, and grandfather, painter Kunimatsu Noboru. Through this exhibition, visitors are invited to experience how the works breathe, imbued with the breath of Kunimatsu, the breath of the land, and the creative vitality that continues to ripple across time and space.

Contact Us

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Exhibition Layout

This exhibition invites visitors to journey through Kunimatsu Kineta's recent signature works, featuring new pieces inspired by his encounter with Towada. It also explores his paternal roots in Akita and the wider Tohoku region, culminating in the story of the Tobiu Art Community in Hokkaido. Exhibition highlights include:

- New works crafted from Aomori wood, including pieces created during a residency in Towada using beech trees from Oirase
- Works from three generations of the Kunimatsu family: Kineta, his father Asuka, and grandfather Noboru
- The activities of the Tobiu Art Community, which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2026

The exhibition opens in a vast gallery filled with towering sculptures from Kunimatsu's iconic *WORMHOLE* series. Visitors are then drawn into the new artistic world Kunimatsu has crafted specifically for this exhibition. The corridor is lined with sculptures carved from cypress sourced in Aomori on the Shimokita Peninsula, evocative of the landscapes around Lake Towada and Oirase Gorge that inspired Kunimatsu. In the adjoining space stands a *WORMHOLE* sculpture carved from Oirase beech during Kunimatsu's Towada residency. As visitors make their way back through the corridor, the exhibition traces the creative lineage of the Kunimatsu family, presenting works by Kineta, his father Asuka, grandfather Noboru, and great-grandfather Midori—a *kokeshi* doll artist from Yurihonjo in Akita—who later settled in Hokkaido. At the Cube Café & Shop, visitors can explore the history of the Tobiu Art Community, which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2026, alongside the activities of the Tobiu Art Festival, founded by Kunimatsu and his collaborators.

About the Exhibition

Title	Kunimatsu Kineta: Breathing in Ripples
Dates	Saturday, December 13, 2025 – Sunday, May 10, 2026
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 *Closed December 30, 2025 – January 1, 2026 for year-end holidays Closed January 13–16 and February 2–6 (closed for maintenance)
Location	Towada Art Center
Admission	1,800 yen Under 18: free
Organized by	Towada Art Center
Endorsed by	Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Aomori Broadcasting Cooperation, FM Aomori, The Daily-Tohoku Shimbun Inc., The To-o Nippo Press & Towada City Board of Education
In Cooperation with	Towada Matti, Co., Ltd. Towada Horseback Riding Club
Curator	Shikata Yukiko

Kunimatsu Kineta



Photo by Sasajima Yasuhito

Born in Hokkaido in 1977. After graduating from the Department of Sculpture at Tama Art University, he has been based at the Tobiu Art Community in Shiraoi, Hokkaido since 2002. He also collaborates with Tateishi Shinichi on the Ayoro Laboratory (2015–), and continues to work as a member of THE SNOWFLAKES (2020–), an artist collective formed at the Tobiu Art Community. Recent solo exhibitions include *TERRA* (t.gallery, Tokyo, 2024) and *Marking the Land* (Tobiu Art Community, Shiraoi, 2022). Group exhibitions include *Reflections — A Distant Light* (Sapporo Art Park, 2025), *ART for EXPO 2025* (Yumeshima, Osaka), and the Sapporo International Art Festival 2024 (Future Theater [Higashi 1-chome Theater], Sapporo). In 2024, he published *Kunimatsu Kineta: Breath in This Land* (Kyuryudo).
<https://kinetakunimatsu.com/>

Event

Gallery Talk by Kunimatsu Kineta

Date & Time	Saturday, December 13, 2025 14:00–14:40
Location	Towada Art Center Exhibition Space
Admission	Free with exhibition ticket

Talk: About *Kunimatsu Kineta: Breathing in Ripples*

Date & Time	Sunday, January 18, 2026 14:00–16:00
Location	Towada Art Center
Admission	Free of charge
Guests	Shikata Yukiko (Director, Towada Art Center & Exhibition Curator)

Talk: From Walking

Date & Time	Sunday, March 1, 2026 14:00–16:00
Location	Towada Art Center
Admission	Free of charge
Guests	Tateishi Shinichi (Ayoro Laboratory, Assistant Director, Education and Outreach Office, National Ainu Museum) Kunimatsu Kineta (Ayoro Laboratory)

Talk: Three Generations of Kunimatsu: Kineta, Asuka, and Noboru

Date & Time	Saturday, March 21, 2026 14:00–16:00
Location	Towada Art Center
Admission	Free of charge
Guests	Asakawa Yasushi (Former Chief Curator, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art; Trustee, Hokkaido Museum of Literature)

Closing Session: Reflections on Northern Tohoku & Hokkaido

Date & Time Saturday, May 9, 2026 14:00–16:00

Location Towafuru Community Center (16-1 Inaoicho, Towada-shi, Aomori)

Admission Free of charge

Guests Nara Yoshitomo (artist) / Kunimatsu Kineta

*A gallery talk by the exhibition curator will be held during the exhibition period.

*Event details will be announced online at a later date.

Towada Art Center

The Towada Art Center opened in 2008 as the first contemporary art center in Japan's Tohoku region. The Towada Art Center opened in 2008 as the first contemporary art center in Japan's Tohoku region. The art center's permanent exhibition comprises 38 works by world-class artists, including Kusama Yayoi, Nara Yoshitomo, Shiota Chiharu, and Ron Mueck. The collection expands beyond the art center to the Art Square, a park-like area where children and adults alike can stroll, relax, and interact with the outdoor artwork.

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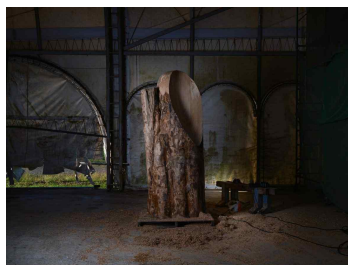
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Beech tree from Oirase, Towada, in Aomori
May 2025
Photo: Oyamada Kuniya

2



Production using Oirase beech
September 26, 2025, Towada
Photo: Oyamada Kuniya

3



Production in Towada
September 24, 2025
Photo by Kunimatsu Kineta

4



Production in Towada
October 4, 2025
Photo: Oyamada Kuniya

5



Production in Towada
October 4, 2025
Photo: Oyamada Kuniya

6



WORMHOLE nearing completion
October 5, 2025
Photo by Kunimatsu Kineta

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New work using Japanese cypress (*hiba*) from
the Shimokita Peninsula
Production of 7 *sculpture sketches*
August 15, 2025
Atelier in Tobiu, Hokkaido, Japan
Photo by Kunimatsu Kineta

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Reference image: *WORMHOLE*, 2025,
approx. 390 x 120 x 100 cm, wood (Mongolian
oak), on view at Expo 2025
Photo by Kutsuna Koichiro

9



Reference image: *WORMHOLE*, 2024, on
view at Sapporo International Art Festival
2024
Photo by Fujikura Tsubasa

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Reference image: *HORIZON*, 2017, 80 x 180
cm, acrylic and charcoal on panel / iron
Photo by Takihara Kai

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Photo by Sasajima Yasuhito

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