

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE IN MORI ART MUSEUM DIRECTORSHIP

The Mori Art Museum is announcing today that the current Director, Nanjo Fumio, will be retiring as of the end of December 2019 and that the current Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Kataoka Mami, will take office on January 1, 2020.

Nanjo Fumio took office in November 2006 as the successor of the first Director, David Elliott, and has led the Mori Art Museum for 13 years. During his tenure, he has developed the Museum's networks, both within Japan and internationally, so as to have the Museum gain international acclaim, and it is fair to say that presence of the Mori Art Museum has subsequently become solid. Nanjo will be assuming the position of Special Advisor afterwards.

Kataoka Mami, who is to take over the current role of Nanjo at the Museum, has made numerous achievements as a curator and has been active internationally, including serving as the Artistic Director of the Sydney Biennale in 2018. In the age of diversity, Kataoka is expected to demonstrate her skills as one of the very few women museum directors in Japan.

Establishing a new system in the year 2020 where Tokyo gathers utmost worldwide attention, the Mori Art Museum is determined to continue making further efforts in today's global society where a wave of big changes are swirling - to fulfill our mission as a contemporary art museum by embracing the concepts of "international" and "contemporary."

## Kataoka Mami

Born 1965 in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. Kataoka was Chief Curator at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (1997-2002) prior to the Mori Art Museum (2003-) where she now serves as Deputy Director (October 2018-) and Chief Curator (2009-).

Kataoka was also International Curator at the Hayward Gallery, London (2007-2009); Co-Artistic Director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2012); and Artistic Director of the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018). She serves as Board Member of CIMAM [International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art] and Professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design Graduate School of Art and Design Studies.

Her projects at Mori includes a number of solo exhibitions for Asian mid-career artists including Ai Weiwei (2009/2012-2014), Aida Makoto (2012), N. S. Harsha (2017) and Shiota Chiharu (2019-). She also co-curated *Roppongi Crossing* triennial exhibition series (2004/2013) that introduces contemporary art from Japan. She curated a thematic exhibition *All about Laughter: Humor in Contemporary Art* (2007) and co-curated a regional exhibition *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia from 1980s to Now* (2017) among others. Kataoka frequently writes and lectures on contemporary art from Japan, Asia and beyond.



Photo: Ito Akinori

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## ON WELCOMING A NEW DIRECTOR FOR THE MORI ART MUSEUM MORI YOSHIKO (CHAIRPERSON, MORI ART MUSEUM)

The central concept of the Roppongi Hills which opened in 2003 has been “cultural heart of a city,” based on the idea that culture serves as a magnetic force in urban development. As a symbol of this commitment to culture in the community, our Founder Mori Minoru built the Mori Art Museum on the top floor of Roppongi Hills Mori Tower.

Embracing as part of its mission pursuit of the contemporary and international, the Museum invited Englishman David Elliott to serve as its first Director, and set about building the foundations for an institution of global standard, aided by Mr. Elliott’s own extensive network of contacts around the world.

In 2006, Nanjo Fumio took over from Elliott to become the second Director, ushering in a period of further development and consolidation. The shows staged by the Mori Art Museum at a pace of slightly under three per annum aside from the “solo exhibitions” by individual artists, include “thematic exhibitions” designed to capture with precision and elaborate on one particular theme; “regional exhibitions” that apprehend the world by region; “architectural exhibitions” that aim to introduce the old and the new of cities and architecture, and the triennial *Roppongi Crossing* exhibitions which showcase aspects of Japan’s contemporary art scene the Museum is especially keen to present at the time; all of which, under the leadership of Director Nanjo, have consistently offered new inspiration, and dynamic perspectives. Several exhibitions have been toured internationally, and the Museum’s collection is also gradually growing, with a special focus on art from Japan and elsewhere in Asia. The networks formed and performance achieved over the thirteen years of Director Nanjo’s tenure are widely recognized and respected internationally, and the Mori Art Museum now occupies a solid position as one of Asia’s leading contemporary art museums.

To lead the Mori Art Museum to the next stage in its development, based on this outstanding progress thus far, a decision was made to appoint a new Director as of January 1, 2020. This will be Kataoka Mami, who has been at the Mori Art Museum since its opening, and currently serves the Museum as Deputy Director and Chief Curator under Director Nanjo. Kataoka also has a large network of contacts overseas, and possesses a broad vision and superb capabilities as a curator, that have seen her serving as Artistic Director of the Sydney Biennale in 2018, to give just one example, and it is anticipated that as Director of the Mori Art Museum, she will apply these skills to further the Museum’s integration as an organization. While keeping the core of the Mori Art Museum on its present track, we intend to also strike out anew by capturing the changing times and continue asking what the Museum needs to remain an institution of international standard and relevance.

Director Nanjo will continue to serve the Museum from 2020 onward as a Senior Advisor.

We hope we can look forward to the continuing support and guidance of all Mori Art Museum stakeholders.

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## ON RETIRING AS DIRECTOR

**NANJO FUMIO** (DIRECTOR, MORI ART MUSEUM)

I joined the Mori Art Museum in 2002 as Deputy Director and member of the Museum's Preparatory Office, assisting first Director David Elliott with the opening in 2003, and taking up the post of Director in 2006. I have since then worked under the Museum's Founder the late Mori Minoru, and Chairperson Mori Yoshiko, embracing the "international" and "contemporary" qualities that have been part of the Museum's mission from the very beginning, trying my best in helping to realize a contemporary art museum with a truly global outlook.

Last year, as the Museum celebrated a landmark fifteen years of operation, to lead the Museum's development into a new phase, the time came to hand over to a new Director. The third Director of the Mori Art Museum will be the current Deputy Director, Kataoka Mami. I am confident that at a time when women have been flourishing in the society, Kataoka, as one of the few female museum directors in Japan and the country's most internationally-active curators, is superbly equipped to guide the Mori Art Museum in the next phase of its development.

In accordance with its motto of "Art + Life," the Mori Art Museum has run a diverse program of exhibitions and events designed to make art integral to everyday life, and contemporary art more familiar to more people. As the Mori Art Museum's global profile has grown, it has succeeded in building relationships on an equal level with numerous other art museums of global prominence. I hope this presence in relations to other museums in the world will continue to be carefully nurtured, as an asset to Japan as a nation.

Recent years have also seen some remarkable changes in the social and cultural climate. We are poised on the eve of an end to the "modernism" that had its beginnings in eighteenth-century Europe, making way for a fundamental revolution in worldviews. That revolution is sure to encourage a redefining of art and the art museums, as well as transform urban, social and economic systems and prompt questions about the purpose of our lives as human beings. I find it highly significant that my final exhibition for the Mori Art Museum will be *Future and the Arts: AI, Robotics, Cities, Life – How Humanity Will Live Tomorrow*.

I will continue to serve the Mori Art Museum after January 1, 2020 as a Senior Advisor, providing ongoing input on various matters. I look forward to continuing contact with you all in this new capacity.

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## ON APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR

**KATAOKA MAMI** (DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR, MORI ART MUSEUM)

As of January 1, 2020, I will be privileged to take up the post of Director of the Mori Art Museum. As someone who has accompanied the Mori Art Museum on the journey of its birth and development since prior to opening, I am eager to explore new visions for the Museum in response to the demands of today's world, in accordance with our late Founder Mori Minoru's expectation that the Museum would serve as a key drawcard in an attractive urban development, and building on the unique position the Museum has earned since then on the global art scene.

Located in Roppongi Hills developed as "cultural heart of a city" - Japanese capital city of Tokyo, the Mori Art Museum provides millions of visitors with creative and innovative contemporary art experiences. To continue fostering a deeper understanding of contemporary art, expanding the frameworks for doing so, and catering to a broader spectator demographic, it will be my intention to embrace what has been developed by the previous Directors, and build on it further.

Specifically, this will have the following three aspects. First, I would like to further strengthen ties with the local community surrounding the Museum. By building close relationships with the community, I hope to increase the Mori Art Museum's presence in the local area, and help to maximize the area's vitality. Second, I hope to maintain a powerful awareness of diversity across all aspects of museum operations. I would like the idea of diversity, of turning our awareness to various inequities in this society and respecting different values and ideas, to be a guiding principle for all art museum activities. And the third is the importance of real experiences. Physical experiences to stimulate the senses are another important thing we as a museum can offer.

With these aspects in mind, I would like to build partnerships with a wide range of art museums, art festivals such as international biennials and triennials, educational institutions, and so on, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region, which would in turn allow us to contribute to the invigoration and growth of the contemporary art sector as a whole.

Our modern world of the twenty-first century faces many new challenges on the political, economic, social, and environmental fronts. Contemporary art museums serve as a microcosm of this, reflecting the world as it is right now. I would like to see the Mori Art Museum function as a focal point for thinking together about a better future, deepening our understanding of the structure of the world in which we live and paying respect to different historical, social and cultural backgrounds, through contemporary artists whose activities span the globe, and the works of those artists.

As I take up this exciting new challenge, I look forward to your continuing advice and guidance.

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