

RON MUECK

APRIL 29 [WED] - SEPTEMBER 23 [WED], 2026 MORI ART MUSEUM [53F, ROPPONGI HILLS MORI TOWER]

The Mori Art Museum and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain are pleased to present the exhibition *Ron Mueck* from Wednesday, April 29, to Wednesday, September 23, 2026.

Ron Mueck (born 1958 in Australia, based in the U.K.) is a contemporary artist who has pushed the boundaries of figurative sculpture through his innovative use of materials, techniques, and methods of expression. These sophisticated works are created through close observations of humanity combined with philosophical reflection and are imbued with a sense of life. They capture the inner emotions and experiences of human beings, including loneliness, vulnerability, anxiety and resilience. The artist gained attention through his participation in *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (1997), and has since held solo exhibitions around the world.

Ron Mueck's sculptures challenge our perception of reality through the careful manipulation of scale and their ability to conjure a convincing sense of the specific whilst simultaneously retaining an ambiguity which leaves them open to individual reflection. They possess a mysterious yet intensely powerful presence which interrogates our relationship with our bodies and, more broadly, with existence itself.

This exhibition is the continuance of a long-lasting relationship between the artist and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain and was first presented in Paris in 2023, traveling to Milan and Seoul before arriving at the Mori Art Museum. This marks the artist's second solo show in Japan, following the

retrospective held at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa in 2008. The exhibition presents eleven works that trace the artist's evolution from early masterpieces to more recent creations, with a focus on major pieces including the large-scale work *Mass* (2016–2017). This comprehensive selection provides deep insight into the development of the artist's practice. Six of these works are making their Japanese debut, and notably, the early masterpiece *Angel* (1997) makes this a truly rare opportunity. It also presents photographs and films by French photographer and filmmaker Gautier Deblonde which document Mueck's studio practice and enrich our understanding how these extraordinary sculptures are created.



Mass
2016–2017
Synthetic polymer paint on fiberglass
Dimensions variable
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 2018
Installation view: *Ron Mueck*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2025
Photo: Nam Kiyong
Photo courtesy: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

PRESS RELEASE

Press Inquiries: Mori Art Museum Public Relations Office [within Kyodo PR]

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BIOGRAPHY

Born 1958 in Melbourne, Australia and based in the U.K. since 1986.

After working in the film and advertising industries for more than twenty years, Mueck began making sculpture in the mid-1990s.

In 1996, he made his debut in the contemporary art world when his sculpture *Pinocchio* (1996) was exhibited alongside paintings by Portuguese painter Paula Rego at an exhibition held at London's Hayward Gallery. The following year, *Dead Dad* (1996-1997), a small-scale portrayal of his deceased father, was featured in *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, and attracted significant attention. Since then, Mueck has presented his works at prestigious museums around the world, with recent solo exhibitions held in Seoul and The Hague in the Netherlands, and a solo exhibition in Sydney scheduled later this year. In Japan, *Standing Woman* (2007) is on permanent display at the Towada Art Center. Creating a single work can take months, sometimes even years, and Mueck has produced approximately fifty works over the past thirty years.

the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain

The Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain is a space for artistic dialogue and experimentation that places the relationship between creation and exhibition at the heart of its institutional project, working in close collaboration with artists.

Since its creation in 1984 by Alain Dominique Perrin, then-President of Maison Cartier, it has exhibited artists from all walks of life, breaking down barriers between practices and fields of thought. Built over the years through a groundbreaking international programme, the Fondation's collection reflects its multidisciplinary nature and the breadth of themes addressed in direct connection with contemporary issues.

The Fondation Cartier carries out its activities and commitments with the desire and ambition to make contemporary creation accessible to the widest possible audience. Through exhibitions projects and a programme of encounters and debates, live performances and talks, it creates bridges between cultural venues and fosters a genuine space for multicultural dialogue.

With a new exhibition space, conceived by the renowned architect Jean Nouvel, on Place du Palais-Royal in Paris, the Fondation Cartier is reinventing itself in order to experiment and share with artists and audiences alike ever new ways of conceiving art.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition Title: *Ron Mueck*

Organizer: Mori Art Museum, the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain

Curated by: Kondo Kenichi (Senior Curator, Mori Art Museum), Charlie Clarke (Associate Curator of the exhibition), Chiara Agradi (Curator, the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain)

Exhibition Period: 2026.4.29 [Wed](public holiday) - 9.23 [Wed](public holiday)

Venue: Mori Art Museum, 53F, Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Hours: 10:00-22:00 | Tue: 10:00-17:00 | *Open until 22:00 on Tuesdays of May 5, August 11 and September 22.

* Admission until 30 minutes before closing. | * Open every day.

Admissions:

	[Weekdays]		[Sat., Sun. & Holidays]	
	On-Site	Online	On-Site	Online
Adults	¥ 2,300	¥ 2,100	¥ 2,500	¥ 2,300
Students (University/High School)	¥ 1,400	¥ 1,300	¥ 1,500	¥ 1,400
Children (Jr. High Students and under)	Free (across the board)			
Seniors (Ages 65 and over)	¥ 2,000	¥ 1,800	¥2,200	¥ 2,000

* All prices include tax.

* For this exhibition, we have an advance booking system for a designated date/time slot.

You may purchase the admission ticket on the dedicated booking website.

* Admissions without advance bookings will be allowed so far as the time slots have not filled up on the day of your visit.

* Ticket also valid for admission into the Mori Art Museum small programs that run concurrently.

General Inquiries: 050-5541-8600 (Hello Dial, within Japan) / +81-(0)47-316-2772 (Hello Dial, from overseas)

www.mori.art.museum/en

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EXHIBITION FEATURES

A Major Solo Exhibition, the First in 18 Years in Japan.

Comprehensively Showcasing the Work of Artist Ron Mueck, Known for His Limited Output, with Many Pieces Making Their Japanese Debut

This is a large-scale exhibition that comprehensively presents the artist's entire creative journey, from early works to recent pieces. Many of the works on display are being shown in Japan for the first time. Given that Mueck's total sculptural output consists of approximately fifty works, organizing a solo exhibition with a substantial number of pieces is exceptionally challenging. This exhibition, featuring eleven works, represents a precious opportunity. It marks his first solo show in Japan since 2008 and the first time such a large number of his works will be displayed in the country.

Japanese Premiere of the Large-scale Work *Mass*

The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Mass* (2016–2017), an installation composed of 100 giant skull sculptures. The work was first unveiled at the NGV Triennial 2017 in Melbourne, Australia, and has since been exhibited in France, Italy, the Netherlands, and most recently in South Korea. Each installation is reconfigured to suit the structure and characteristics of the hosting museum's exhibition space, and the Mori Art Museum presentation, occupying approximately 300 square meters, will likewise be site-specific.

Lifelike Sculptures that Evoke Individual Emotional Responses

Mueck creates sculptures using highly detailed techniques through meticulous observation of human subjects and deep philosophical contemplation. His sophisticated works, brimming with vitality and masterfully expressing inner human emotions and experiences such as solitude, fragility, vulnerability, anxiety, and resilience, captivate all who encounter them and invite viewers on a journey of contemplation about what it means to be human and what it means to live.

Rare Glimpse into the Creative Process

The exhibition also features a selection of photographs and two films created by French photographer Gautier Deblonde. He has documented Mueck's creative process for over 25 years, offering visitors a rare behind-the-scenes look at Mueck's studios in London and southern England, as well as his creative process.



Chicken / Man
Film written and directed by Gautier Deblonde
2019–2025
HD film
13 min.

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FEATURED KEY WORKS

Mass Japan Premiere

This work consists of 100 sculpted giant human skulls, arranged by the artist to create an environment specific to each museum space. Since its debut in Melbourne, Australia, in 2017, subsequent configurations have each revealed a new side to the work and the presentation at the Mori Art Museum will be equally unique. The audience is confronted with the complexity of the skull's physical form whilst their journey through the installation allows time to reflect on the skulls' powerful presence.

The skull as a subject matter has repeatedly appeared throughout Western art history alongside the Latin-derived concept of "Memento Mori" (A reminder of the inevitability of death). It also evokes medicine, anatomy, and archaeology, and is frequently used in contemporary popular culture, making it a universal motif. The title "Mass" has various meanings: things piled up like a mountain, large quantities or groups, and Christian Mass, among others. These skulls' subtle variations differ in color tone and facial details, suggesting they represent a collection of individuals. However, there are no clues to reveal who they are, and they confront us as a collective group.

"The human skull is a complex object.

A potent, graphic icon we recognize immediately.

At once familiar and exotic, it repels and attracts simultaneously.

It is impossible to ignore, demanding our attention at a subconscious level."

– Ron Mueck

Woman with Shopping Japan Premiere

This work depicts a mother whose hands are occupied with heavy shopping bags while she carries a baby in the fold of her coat. Her appearance is not idealized, and her exhausted expression reveals a daily life where she seems crushed by the weight of everyday responsibilities. Made smaller than life-size, the mother's fatigue, fragility, and vulnerability are emphasized. Moreover, the mother's gaze into the distance never meets either the baby's or the viewer's eyes.

This work might be a contemporary interpretation of the "Madonna and Child," a staple of Western art history. However, the work actually originated from a real-life encounter. The artist spotted a mother with orange shopping bags carrying a baby at a traffic light intersection near his studio in North London. He sketched her on the back of a parking ticket. Mueck expresses the poignant scenes found within the daily life of a metropolis.



Mass

2016-2017 Synthetic polymer paint on fiberglass

Dimensions variable

Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 2018

Installation view: Ron Mueck, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2025

Photo: Nam Kiyong

Photo courtesy: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea



Woman with Shopping

2013 Mixed media 113 × 46 × 30 cm

Collection: Thaddaeus Ropac, London - Paris - Salzburg - Milan - Seoul

Installation view: Ron Mueck, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2025

Photo: Nam Kiyong

Photo courtesy: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

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Angel Japan Premiere

This work, featuring a man with large wings on his back sitting in a chair, is one of Mueck's early masterpieces. *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* held in 1997 brought the artist into the spotlight. The exhibition toured to New York (Brooklyn Museum, 1999–2000), where this work was exhibited. *Angel* was created after seeing Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's *Allegory with Venus and Time* (c. 1754–1758) at the National Gallery in London. In the original painting, Venus is accompanied by an elderly winged man representing "Time," and Mueck drew inspiration from this figure. The man expressed in this work is small compared to the human body, looking downward and somewhat sadly lost in thought, differing from the typical image of angels.



Angel
1997
Mixed media
110 × 87 × 81 cm
Private Collection
Photo courtesy: Anthony d'Offay, London

In Bed

This large-scale work, measuring 6.5 meters long and approximately 4 meters wide, is a giant portrayal of a middle-aged woman lying in bed. Though depicting an ordinary moment of daily life, her expression as she supports her chin with her hand and gazes upward invites various interpretations—anxiety, longing, contemplation. While the monumental scale of the work is surprising, viewers find themselves staring intently at the woman's face positioned at eye level, wondering what she might be thinking. Additionally, because she gazes across the room, never quite in our eyeline, viewers can scrutinize the work's details without confronting the woman, creating a relationship between artwork and viewer that differs from human-to-human interaction.

This work was exhibited in *Collection of the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (2006), and because an image of the work was used as the key visual for this exhibition, it became well-known in Japan.



In Bed
2005
Mixed media
162 × 650 × 395 cm
Collection: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain
Installation view: *Ron Mueck*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2025
Photo: Nam Kiyong
Photo courtesy: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

Mask II

This work presents the artist's own sleeping face at approximately four times actual size. The work is mounted on a pedestal, and the face appears relaxed, the slightly open mouth creating the impression that breathing sounds could emerge. However, the back of the work is hollow, raising questions about whether this man exists or not. Similarly, if this were a true mask, the face should not appear drooping, raising doubts about whether this face is human or a mask. This work can be said to be typical of Mueck's work, showing the exquisite balance between reality and unreality that characterizes his pieces. The title might simply indicate the plain fact that this is merely a mask, or it might suggest that while the artist is expressing the features of his own face, it is nothing more than a consciously constructed self-image.



Mask II
2002 Mixed media 77 × 118 × 85 cm
Private Collection, London
Installation view: Ron Mueck, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, 2025
Photo: Nam Kiyong
Photo courtesy: the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

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