

Absolute Chairs

February 17th (Sat) 2024 – May 12th (Sun) 2024

■ Exhibition Overview

Known since it opened as a showcase of masterpieces of chair design, “the museum with chairs” presents chairs in contemporary art from a new perspective, different from conventional exhibitions of designers’ chairs.

A chair is an absolute theme which has inspired many designers’ and architects’ creativity and has been a fascinating motif for artists, too. It can be a symbol of authority as in the case of a throne, or assist the human body as in the case of a wheelchair. Alternatively, it can even implicate death and violence as in the case of an electric chair. If we sit on a chair and face one another, a relationship is established. While being an extremely familiar item, bearing broad meanings and symbolism within its close involvement with the society and human body, the chair might be described as the ultimate daily commodity.

By capturing the significance of a chair, through their works, artists have brought discord or contradictions in the society, personal memories, and relationships with others to light. What stimulates our thoughts is not the functionality or formal beauty of such chairs but the radical, unconventional ways in which they are presented.

By introducing 83 planar, three-dimensional, or video works regarding chairs by artists from both Japan and abroad, we shall analyze the connotations of chairs in contemporary art.

* The exhibition title Absolute Chairs was inspired by Absolute Beginners, a song by David Bowie. The exhibition plan developed from questions that rose from the idea of the “absolute”, such as “what is the source of the definitive charm of a chair?”, or “what is the ultimate chair in art?”



Miyanaga Aiko, *waiting for awakening - chair-*, 2017. Photo: Kioku Keizo
Installation view from "Miyanaga Aiko: Rowing Style" (Takamatsu City Museum, 2019.)

©MIYANAGA Aiko Courtesy of Mizuma Art

■ Major Features

1. The theme of “chairs” in contemporary art, presented from the new perspective of “the museum with chairs”.
2. A deep examination of the various meanings and symbolism of “chairs” through the lens of contemporary art.
3. A spectrum of 83 pieces connected to “chairs” – two- and three-dimensional pieces and film works – by 28 creators.

■ Chapters

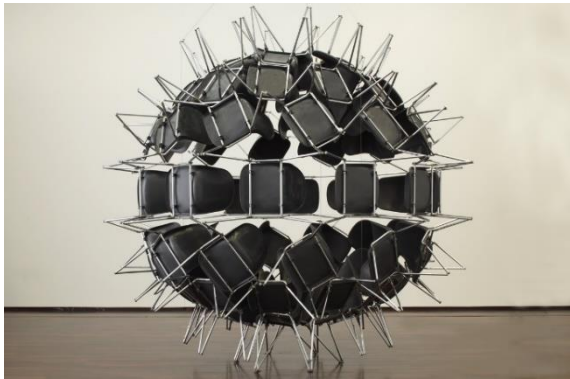
- Chapter 1. Unsittable Chairs in Museums
- Chapter 2. Chairs Tracing the Human Body
- Chapter 3. Chairs to Visualize Authority
- Chapter 4. Narrative Chairs
- Chapter 5. Chairs Which Establish Relationships

■ Artists

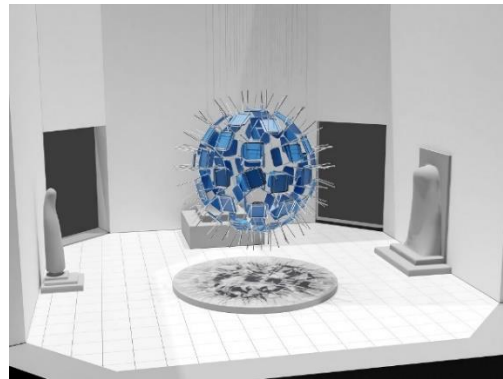
Francis BACON, Mirosław BAŁKA, Hans OP DE BEECK, Dara BIRNBAUM, Michel DE BROIN, Byproducts Market, Cristóvão CANHAVATO (Kester), Marcel DUCHAMP, Anna HALPRIN, HIWA Kazuhiko, ISHIDA Takashi, KUDO Tetsumi, Sutee KUNAVICHAYANONT, KUSAMA Yayoi, Jim LAMBIE, MIYANAGA Aiko, NAWA Kohei, OKAMOTO Taro, ONO Yoko, Diana RAHIM, Rosas, SHAO Yinong / MU Chen, TAKAMATSU Jiro, TAKEOKA Yuji, USHIODA Tokuko, Andy WARHOL, WATANABE Hitomi, YU SORA

■ A Japan First! Production in Residence by Michel de Broin

Michel de Broin (Canada) will be residing in Japan to produce work and hold his first exhibition in the country. He will install his new work *Dendritic Cell* (a type of immune cell named for its probing “tree-like” or dendritic shapes) in the Center Hall in the basement, using 40 conference chairs as the material. The piece is based on his 2005 work *Black Whole Conference*, but he is employing chairs he obtained in Japan, and re-constructing the work to suit the museum space. The collective form created by his chairs can be understood as a metaphor for human society.



[Reference] Michel de Broin, *Black Whole Conference*, 2005,
Val-de-Marne Contemporary Art Museum
Photo: Peter Rosemann



Drawing for *Dendritic Cell*

Michel de Broin

Born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1970. Obtained a Master's degree in Visual arts from Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Based in Montreal. He exhibits work that visualizes the industrial systems that construct society and the various mechanisms that dominate humanity, through sculpture and film pieces, as well as installation and performance art. Utilizing ready-made products and everyday forms, he is known for his style of humorously expressing an ironic view of social and political matters.

Exhibition Information

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Exhibition Title | Absolute Chairs |
| Period | Feb. 17 th (Sat) 2024 – May 12 th (Sun) 2024 |
| Closed | Mondays (Open Apr. 29 th , May 6 th) |
| Opening Hours | 10:00~17:30 (Last entry to the gallery 17:00) |
| Fee | Adults ¥1300 (¥1040) High School Students ¥1040 (¥830) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The price in () is the fee for a group of 20 people or over. • Admission of junior high school students and younger, and those with a disability certificate (including one attendant) are free of charge. • Special Exhibition ticket holders (excluding Grutto Pass) may view the MOMAS Collection on the first floor of the venue as well as this exhibition. |
| Number of exhibits | 83 |
| Organizers | The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, The Tokyo Shimbun |
| Cooperation | National Museum of Ethnology |
| Sponsorship | Toyama Memorial Museum Grants for Arts and Scientific Research |
| Cooperation in PR | East Japan Railway Company Omiya Branch Office, FM NACK5 |

I Venue

The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama

〒330-0061

9-30-1 Tokiwa, Urawa-ku, Saitama-shi (in Kita-Urawa Park), Saitama, Japan

TEL: 048-824-0111 FAX: 048-824-0119

<https://pref.spec.ed.jp/momas/>

Transport

- Kita-Urawa Station on JR Keihin-Tohoku Line. 3 min. walk from the West Exit. From Tokyo, take a train bound for Omiya on the Keihin-Tohoku Line. Approx. 35 mins. from JR Tokyo or JR Shinjuku Station.
- No parking at the museum, but discount available at "Times, The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama East". Chartered buses should contact the museum beforehand. Disabled visitors can use allocated parking spaces though availability is limited.
- Please check our website for latest information.

I Related Events

OTalk show: “Representations of the Chair in Art”

Speakers: Eriko Yamaguchi (Professor, Tsukuba University), Akira Tatehata (Director, MOMAS), Kana Uo (Curator, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art), Ayaki Saeki (Curator, MOMAS)

Date and time: Feb. 23rd (Fri. – national holiday) 13:30-16:00 (opens 13:00)

Capacity: 80 (no application necessary/first-come first-served basis)

Admission: Free

OTakashi Ishida (featured artist) Performance + Talk + Screening

Date and time: March 10th (Sun.) 14:30-15:50 (opens 14:00)

Location: 2nd floor auditorium

Capacity: 80 (no application necessary/first-come first-served basis)

Admission: Free

Contents: A performance and talk show by the artist, alongside the screening of a film piece that features chairs symbolically.

OKazuhiko Hiwa (featured artist) Workshop “walkingpractice”

Date: April 21st (Sun.)

*Advanced reservation required. Contents and reservation details will be made available on our website.

OGallery Talk by the Curator

Date and time: March 23rd (Sat.), April 13th (Sat.) from 15:00 (approx. 30 mins.)

Location: 2nd floor exhibition room *Admission to the exhibition required

■ Slide Talk

Upon group request, the museum will provide a slide talk introducing the features of the exhibition (reservation required). For inquiries and reservations, contact education/PR (tel: 048-824-0110).

■ Concurrent Exhibitions

MOMAS Collection (1st floor exhibition room)

Dec. 2nd 2023 (Sat.) – Feb. 25th 2024 (Sun.)

Selection, Alluring Realism

March 2nd (Sat.) – June 2nd (Sun.)

Selection, Chairs: The Museum with Chairs, Saikin no Tamamono (Recent Gifts)

■ Catalog

Official catalog, *Absolute Chairs: Representations of the Chair in Contemporary Art*, is due to be published by Heibonsha.

ISBN: 928-4-582-20735-4

172 pages Price: ¥3,300 (incl. tax)

■ Inquiries

Regarding exhibitions: Saeki, Yoshioka, Matsue / Regarding PR and images: Shigihara

Tel: 048-824-0111 (main) / 048-824-0110 (curatorial department) Fax: 048-824-0118

p2401115@pref.saitama.lg.jp (exhibition)

■ PR Images

For inquiries regarding images of the work, please contact the museum. Images will be provided by email. Inquiries should be addressed to Shigihara at p2401115@pref.saitama.lg.jp.

- When showing images, please caption the work.
- Please refrain from trimming or overlaying text on the images.
- Images of the exhibition can be provided. Inquire for details.



①



②



③



④



⑤



⑥



⑦



⑧

Captions and Credits

- ① Miyanaga Aiko, *waiting for awakening -chair-*, 2017. Photo: Kioku Keizo
Installation view from “Miyanaga Aiko: Rowing Style” (Takamatsu City Museum, 2019)
©MIYANAGA Aiko Courtesy of Mizuma Art Gallery
- ② Cristóvão CANHAVATO (Kester) (Kester), *Armchair*, 2012, National Museum of Ethnology.
- ③ Ishida Takashi, *Chair/ Screen*, 2002.
- ④ Mirosław BAŁKA, *ø 51x4, 85x43x49*, 1998, The National Museum of Art, Osaka.
- ⑤ Hans op de Beeck, *Sleeping Girl*, 2017, Taguchi Art Collection/ Taguchi Art Foudation.
©Studio Hans Op de Beeck
- ⑥ Byproducts Market, *Absolute Chairs #1_rodin's crate*, 2024, Collection of the Artist.
- ⑦ Anna Halprin, *Seniors Rocking*, 2005/ 2010. Courtesy of ZAS Film AG
- ⑧ Diana Rahim, *Interventions*, 2020-, Collection of the Artist.