

Announcing the Launch of the National Center for Art Research: Japan's New Hub for the Sustainable Promotion of Art

On Tuesday, March 28, 2023, the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art (Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, President: Osaka Eriko) will launch the National Center for Art Research (Director: Kataoka Mami) within the Institution as a new comprehensive hub, the nation's first of its kind, to sustainably and internationally develop the promotion of art in Japan at a time when contemporary society is undergoing great change.

Since the dawn of the 21st century, the global social, economic, and political landscape has been changing dramatically, and there are growing expectations for the role of the arts in achieving a more diverse, inclusive, and sustainable society.

With the credo of "connecting, deepening, and expanding art," the National Center for Art Research will serve as a new hub that links art museums, research institutions, and various stakeholders both in Japan and overseas, and will not only conduct research in specialized fields, but will also collect and disseminate information nationally and internationally, promote the active use of art collections, build interpersonal networks, enhance learning programs, support artists and more.

National Center for Art Research Projects: Four Key Areas

The National Center for Art Research will engage in the following activities while cooperating widely with society on many different levels:

1. Promoting Utilization of Museum Collections

The Center will collaborate with the National Art Museums and other art museums in Japan to promote and publicize exhibitions that utilize their collections, so as to **heighten awareness and appreciation of art in Japan and strengthen cooperation among the nation's museums**. Also, the Center will promote the restoration and conservation of artworks that may become important national assets in the future.

⇒ Projects: [The National Museum of Art Collection Dialogue](#), [The National Museum of Art Collection Plus](#), etc.

2. Compiling and Disseminating Research Resources

As a national research hub, the Center will comprehensively compile and disseminate information from all over Japan, raise Japan's profile in the art field globally, and **implement the functions of an international center for research on Japanese artists and artworks**.

⇒ Project: [Japanese Museum Collections Search \(SHŪZŌ, i.e. "collection" in Japanese\)](#)

3. Developing International Relations and Networks

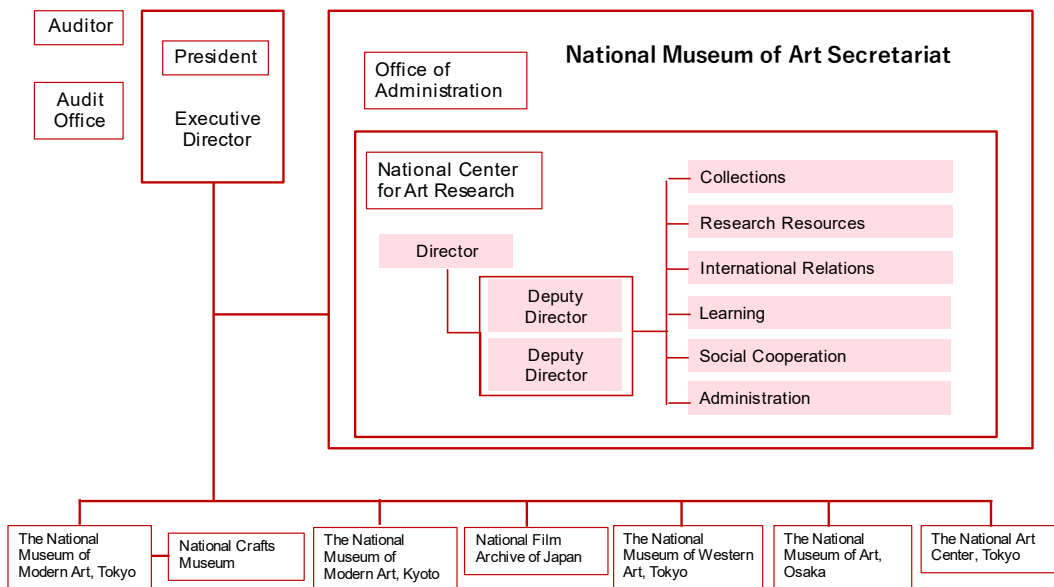
As an international center providing access to information, the Center will work to build international networks, and promote effective information dissemination and cooperation. Also, we will focus on providing support to artists so as to **elevate the status and value of Japanese art in a global context**.

4. Enhancing Learning

The Center will aim to enhance the social value of art by researching, developing, and implementing high-quality learning programs, while maintaining awareness of broadly

relevant issues such as social inclusion, diversity, and dialogue, as well as meeting SDGs, all of which will be required of museums in the future.

**Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art
National Center for Art Research Organization Chart**



Comments from NCAR Director Kataoka Mami

As the world's political, economic, and social concerns grow increasingly complex and uncertain, the pursuit of inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability have emerged as urgent global-scale issues that transcend any one field. Due to global trends in art and museums, there is a need to take a strategic and long-term approach with a view to the next generation in order to connect art in Japan with the global art world, and expand these relations and develop them in a sustainable manner. The National Center for Art Research is poised to begin its work as a platform that at once strives to foster a greater permeation of art in society, while at the same time, deepening expertise in the field. As we reflect a wide range of views, and engage in learning and discussion, I hope to join with everyone in considering how we might best promote art in Japan.




Photo: Ito Akinori

Profile: Kataoka Mami

Kataoka Mami joined the Mori Art Museum in 2003, taking on the role of Director in 2020. Prior to this, she was researcher on cultural policies at the NLI Research Institute and inaugural chief curator at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery. Beyond Tokyo, Kataoka has held positions at the Hayward Gallery in London, where from 2007 to 2009 she was the institution's first International Curator; she has also acted as Co-Artistic Director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012), Artistic Director for the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018) and Artistic Director for the Aichi Triennale 2022. Kataoka served as a Board Member (2014-2020) and the President (2020-2022) of CIMAM [International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art]. From 2018 to 2022, she also chaired the Contemporary Art Committee Japan, a starting committee of the Art Platform Japan, an initiative undertaken by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Kataoka has been a committee member and judge for numerous organizations and initiatives, including the Policy Subcommittee of the 20th Council for Cultural Affairs and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO.

Organization Outline

Name	Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art National Center for Art Research
Acronym	NCAR (pronounced “N-car”)
Date of Establishment	Tuesday, March 28, 2023
Logo	 <p>National Center for Art Research</p> <p>In the logo, based on the letter “A” for Art, the Center’s connection of people involved in art, and advancement of art in Japan, is represented by an image of synapses branching off from a neuron and seeking to connect to other neurons in a living organism.</p>
Members	26
Official Website	https://ncar.artmuseums.go.jp/en/
Office Location	Kitanomaru Square 2F, 1-13-12 Kudan-kita, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0073 Japan

About the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art

The Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art carries out a wide range of activities as the nexus of art advancement in Japan through its member museums: the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (Takebashi, Tokyo), the National Crafts Museum (Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture), the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (Okazaki Park, Kyoto), the National Film Archive (Kyobashi, Tokyo), the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo (Ueno Park, Tokyo), the National Museum of Art, Osaka (Nakanoshima), and the National Art Center, Tokyo (Roppongi, Tokyo).

<Contact (Personnel in Charge of Public Relations)>

National Center for Art Research Public Relations Office
(part of PRAP Japan, Inc.)

Tel: 03-4570-2273 Fax: 03-4580-9127

E-mail: ncar@prap.co.jp

Business hours: Mon. – Fri., 10:00 - 18:00 p.m.

*Except for national holidays and year-end / New Year holidays

Specific Project Examples: Promoting Utilization of Art Museum Collections Collections Group (Leader: Otani Shogo)

●National Art Museums Cooperative Projects

In cooperation with museums nationwide, two collaborative projects utilizing the National Art Museums' collections are under preparation, with the aim of contributing to the enhancement of regional art appreciation opportunities and the revitalization of museums' exhibition and research activities.

The National Museum of Art Collection Dialogue

- Implementation of exhibitions comprising both works from the collections of the National Art Museums, and those of other museums that host the exhibitions.
- Selected via an open call for proposals from museums nationwide.
- Details of call for proposals to be announced on March 28, 2023.

The National Museum of Art Collection Plus

- Implementation of thematic exhibits comprising one or more works from the National Art Museums' collections in addition to works from the collection of the host museum.
- Selected via an open call for proposals from museums nationwide.
- Details of call for proposals to be announced on March 28, 2023.

●Disseminating information on restoration initiatives and research on artworks

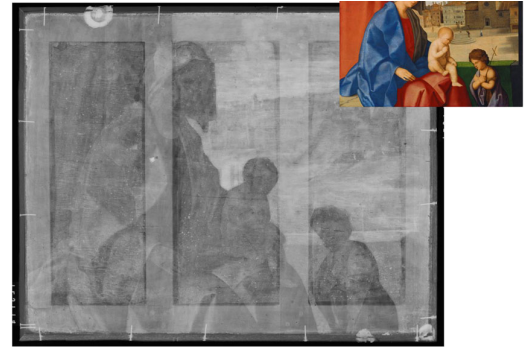
Compiling and sharing information on the science of conservation and restoration in Japan and abroad.

- Plan to hold workshops welcoming conservation and restoration experts from overseas.
- Preparations underway for event to be held in or around October 2023.



Exhibition view of "National Touring Exhibition of Western Art from the NMWA: When Here and Afar Meet: Western Art in Yamagata" (in fiscal 2021)

X-ray transmission image of a canvas painting



Specific Project Examples: Compilation and Dissemination of Research Resources

Research Resources Group (Leader: Kawaguchi Masako)

●Compilation and Dissemination of Information on Items in Museum Collections Throughout Japan

The Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art took over the Japanese Museum Collections Search (nicknamed SHŪZŌ, meaning "collection" in Japanese), a database launched on Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan, which aims to render visible and internationally share information on the collections of art museums throughout Japan.

Japanese Museum Collections Search (SHŪZŌ)

- In March 2021, the Japanese Museum Collections Search (SHŪZŌ) was launched as an initiative of Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan. The database initially contained data on approximately 70,000 items from 85 museums.
- In April 2022, the Institution took over the project. The database was expanded to approximately 143,000 items from 150 museums.
- A framework for ongoing administration of the system is in place for April 2023. The database is scheduled to be expanded to approximately 160,000 items from 163 museums.

●Initiatives to Establish International Research Center Functions

The Research Resources Group will compile information that contributes to research on Japanese art in Japan and abroad, and make this information available in both Japanese and English.

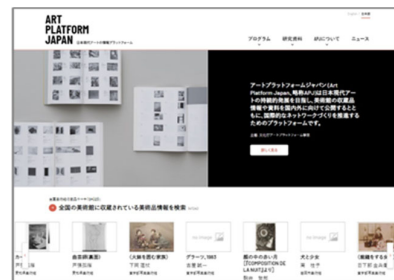
"Encyclopedia of Japanese Artists" (Provisional Name) (New Project)

- The encyclopedia is to contain comprehensive information on Japanese artists, including not only basic data but also information on major exhibitions, collections, and literature, so as to contribute to research in Japan and overseas.
- Under preparation, scheduled for release in or around September 2023.

Contents of Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan Website Transferred in FY2023

●Taking Over Media Arts Database

- The Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunka-cho) has been administering the Media Arts Database since FY2010, and the Research Resources Group is preparing to take it over in FY2023.



Ongoing administration of the Japanese Museum Collections Search (SHŪZŌ)



The Research Resources Group will take over administration of English literature content on Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan

Specific Project Examples: Enhancement of Learning Learning Group (Leader: Ichijo Akiko)

●Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

The Learning Group will conduct research in collaboration with institutions and universities in the fields of social welfare and medicine, focusing on the role of art in promoting people's health and wellbeing.

Museum Project for a Super-Aged Society

- Survey of cutting-edge practices at UK museums and other institutions.
- Development of digital art appreciation tools for people with dementia, and examination of programs for caregivers that incorporate these tools.
- Collaboration with institutions and universities in the fields of social welfare and medicine via the JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency) Art Communication Co-Creation Center for a Symbiotic Society.

International Symposium on Health and Wellbeing

- A symposium, at which the main guests will be museum professionals from the UK, is under consideration (details to be announced around April 2023).

●Initiatives to Improve Accessibility

The Learning Group will investigate current issues and develop materials and tools to improve accessibility so that enjoyment of museums and art is available to all.

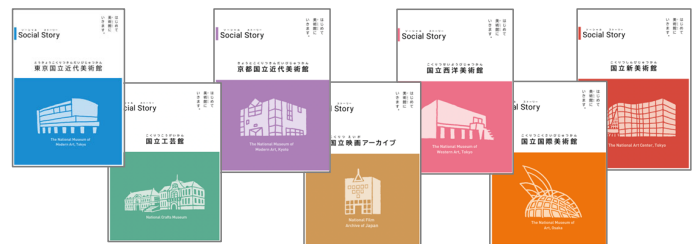
“Social Story”

(Museum guide primarily for people with developmental disabilities and their families)

- Produced for all seven National Art Museums in FY2022
- In FY2023, the National Art Museums will promote use of the guide, and online courses for related personnel are being considered so it can be expanded to art museums nationwide.



A program of creative ageing at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo
Photo by Nakajima Yusuke



“Social Stories” for each museum



National Center
for Art Research

Specific Project Example: International Relations and Networks

●Overseas Dissemination of Information on Japanese Art and Building an International Person-to-Person Network

(Specific projects will be planned and implemented starting in April 2023, when the International Relations Group will be established.)

As a center for access to information that contributes to enhancement of the international value of Japanese art, the Group is considering projects such as:

- Translating and disseminating literature on Japanese art
- Building an international interpersonal network by welcoming overseas experts for workshops, etc.
- Promoting international dissemination of information on artists active today.



Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan contemporary art workshop, 2019



Bunka-cho Art Platform Japan contemporary art workshop, 2019



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