

STATEMENT BY THE ARTISTS OF AICHI TRIENNALE 2019 ON THE CLOSURE OF *AFTER "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION?"*

We the undersigned are participating artists in Aichi Triennale 2019. We here express our thoughts on the closure of the exhibit *After "Freedom of Expression"*, a section of the Triennale featuring artworks that have experienced various forms of censorship at public art institutions across Japan.

As chosen by artistic director Daisuke Tsuda, the theme of Aichi Triennale 2019 is "Taming Y/Our Passion." In his statement on the exhibition concept, Tsuda writes:

Many concerns are shared around the world today, including anxieties related to the increase in terrorism, cutbacks in hiring domestic workers, crime, and making ends meet. Feelings of aversion towards refugees and immigrants have risen to unprecedented heights in the United States and Europe. The United Kingdom voted to leave the EU in 2016. Donald Trump was voted president of the United States under the platform of "America First." Xenophobic voices have become emboldened here in Japan as well. At the source is anxiety—the anxiety of an uncertain future, and the anxiety of feeling unsafe and vulnerable to danger.

Many of us feel anxious about the strong displays of emotion roiling Japan today. Irrespective of its being directed at a single work or section of the exhibition, we have grave concerns about the occurrence of political intervention into the Triennale, as well as threats of violence against the exhibition and those involved in it. It is a fact that the exhibition received hundreds of intimidating phone calls after the opening of the Triennale, as well as a fax warning of an attack on the venue using gasoline and fire—recalling the July 18 arson attack on an animation studio in Kyoto that has claimed at least thirty-five lives to date. We are alarmed by the possibility of any harm coming to the people watching over our works during the exhibition period, and will do everything in our power to resist such terroristic threats and intimidation. We believe that all precautions must be taken to ensure the mental and physical safety of the exhibition staff and visitors.

We insist that *After "Freedom of Expression"* should remain on view on that condition. Normally an exhibition space is meant to be an open, public site, but the closure of the exhibit just three days after the Triennale opening has robbed people of the opportunity to see the artworks and foreclosed any active discussion of them. Moreover, it has shut down the diversity of responses, ranging from feelings of anger to sorrow, that viewers might have had in front of the artworks. We strongly object to any violent intervention by politicians into exhibits, screenings, and performances at art institutions, and the kinds of menacing acts and intimidation that drove the Triennale to close *After "Freedom of Expression"* as an emergency measure.

We practice art not to suppress or divide people, but to find different ways of creating solidarity among them, and to pursue the possibilities for free thinking beyond political beliefs. We strive to be creative in the face of uncertainty. Through the production of sculptures, through texts, paintings, performances, music, reenactments, psychomagic, films and videos, and by means of new media technology, by collaborating, and by seeking out new routes and detours, we artists have tried to create a place in the Triennale where, if only temporarily, people's love and compassion, anger and sadness, and even their murderous feelings can be imaginatively inverted and overturned.

What we seek is a patient process for reaching deeper understanding—the opposite of violent interventions. What we seek is a discussion that is open to all people and respects individual opinions and conditions, and a Triennale that is capable of realizing such a discussion.

We request the following: (1) the immediate restoration of the Aichi Triennale 2019's autonomy from political pressure and intimidation; (2) the continuation of the exhibition under the assurance of safety for all its staff and visitors; and (3) the establishment of a platform for free and vigorous discussion that is open to all, including the participating artists.

It is our conviction that the first principle of any creative endeavor is thinking about and coming up with new solutions together.

August 6, 2019

72 Participating Artists of Aichi Triennale 2019

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List of Artists (August 6, 2019)

Aoki Miku	Mónica Mayer
BeBe(Shinkazoku)	Mayumi (Shinkazoku)
Candice Breitz	Miura Motoi
James Bridle	Miyata Nana (Shinkazoku)
Tania Bruguera	Nagahata Koji
Miriam Cahn	Nagata Kosuke
Pia Camil	Ohashi Ai
Chim↑Pom	Okamoto Mitsuhiro
Heather Dewey Hagborg	One-phrase • Politics(Shinkazoku)
dividual inc.	Oura Nobuyuki
exonemo	Oyama Natsuko (Shinkazoku)
Echigo Masashi	Park Chan-kyong
Endo Mikiko	Sawada Hana
Fujii Hikaru	Shirakawa Yoshio
Fujiwara Aoi	Shimada Yoshiko
Dora García	Studio Drift
Ge Yulu	Suge Syunichi
Hanzaka Yui (Shinkazoku)	Takamine Tadasu
Hirose Nanako	Takayama Akira
Hoshiwowa Yumeka (Shinkazoku)	Tanaka Koki
Ichihara Satoko	Javier Téllez
Imamura Yohei	TM(Shinkazoku)
Imazu Kei	Toda Hikaru
Ishiba Ayako	Tomita Katsuya
Ito Gabin	Tomotoshi
Iwasaki Takahiro	Tsuda Michiko
Regina José Galindo	Usui Yui
Koizumi Meiro	Wada Yuina (Shinkazoku)
Komanbe (Shinkazoku)	Washio Tomoyuki
Komori Haruka	Anna Witt
Kuwakubo Ryota	Yuan Goang-Ming
Kyun-chome	Yumisashi Kanji
Leung Chi Wo + Sara Wong	Yoshida Chie (Shinkazoku)
Lim Minouk	Yoshigai Nao
Jason Maling	
Amanda Martinez	
Claudia Martinez Garay	
Masumoto Yoshiko	