

## Tohru Nakazaki FICITION TRAVELER



### Overview

Exhibition Title: Tohru Nakazaki: Fiction Traveler

Dates: November 5, 2022-January 29, 2023

Open Hours: 10:00-18:00 (last admission at 17:30)

Venue: Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito

Closed on Mondays (except for January 9), December 27-January 3 and January 10

Admission Fee: ¥900 (¥700 for group of more than 20 people)

Free of charge for High school student, seniors over 70, the disabled and one accompanying attendant

→ Student card or other identification with age required.

- One-year Pass: ¥2,000 for a one-year pass

- "First Friday" special discount for students and senior citizens

→ Student card holders and seniors 65 to 69 get a discount rate of ¥100 each first Friday (December 2, January 6)

Organized by Mito Arts Foundation

Funded by a grant from JAPAN CENTER FOR LOCAL AUTONOMY

Supported by AOI CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD.,

TOYOTA COROLLA SHIN-IBARAKI CO., LTD., Suntory Holdings Limited.

Curated by Yuu Takehisa (Artistic Director, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito)



## Outline of the Exhibition

This exhibition is the first large-scale solo museum exhibition of artist Tohru Nakazaki, who produces diverse artworks with the theme of gap, using lenient methods. Looking into his recent literary installations based on interviews, the exhibition premieres his latest work that deciphers Mito and Art Tower Mito, along with his past works, including his representative ones, presenting a comprehensive picture of Tohru Nakazaki.

Born in 1976 in Mito, he first encountered Art Tower Mito's activities when he was a high school student, starting his path to becoming an artist. Since then, he has visited our exhibitions as an audience, and after he moved the base of his artistic activities to Mito in 2007, he started to be involved in our activities as an artist. In this exhibition, featuring Mito, Nakazaki's hometown, and Art Tower Mito, the museum most familiar to him, as motifs, he conjures up "another story" about them, captured from a unique perspective, through interviews and research. In addition, the exhibition traces his artistic activities by featuring his old and new works together, from his early works with signboard motifs through his paintings, drawings, and recompositions of past installations to his recent three-dimensional works with acrylic colors and fluorescent lights.

From growing up, through encounter with contemporary art, to the present as a contemporary artist—assuming an air of autobiography, this milestone solo exhibition could be realized only in Nakazaki's hometown.

Ever since I can remember, Mito Komon, the period drama with a protagonist from Mito, was on TV in prime time. I'm a born and bred Mito native, who grew up feeling, even as a kid, somewhat proud to see the name of the town I live in every week on TV. Yet when I was still small, I woke up from the dream of believing my grandpa actually was Mito Komon, and realized Santa Claus didn't exist. Probably it was a bit later that I learned Mito Komon didn't actually travel around Japan as much as he does in the drama.

Yet that doesn't mean I woke up from the story. Just like the period drama on TV was entertainment presupposing an element of fiction, art is also woven by continuously going back and forth between story, fiction, and reality, just like Echigo-no-Chirimen-Donya, the fictional identity Mito Komon famously presents himself with. I assume I have been on a journey, wandering in a gap between reality and fiction for more than 20 years. I probably believe that a lie like a joke can sometimes be an instrumental force in producing reality like a dream.

Tohru Nakazaki

### ▼Tohru Nakazaki

Artist. Born in Ibaraki, in 1976. Studied at the Musashino Art University Graduate School of Art and Design, Doctoral Degree in Design. Currently based in Mito. He is a multimedia artist, working with performance, video, and installation, mainly using signboards as motifs. He explores the dissonance that occurs in our commonalities, such as language and images, working across various mediums. In 2006, he formed the artist unit Nadegata Instant Party. In 2007, he founded the space PLAYROOM (NAKAZAKI Tohru + Mizuki Endo). Since 2011, he has been in charge of the artistic direction of "Project FUKUSHIMA!"



## ▼ Highlights of the Exhibition

### ① **The first solo museum exhibition of Tohru Nakazaki, who is from and lives in Mito, where we are located**

Growing up in Mito, Nakazaki started to have contact with Art Tower Mito's activities when he was about 18 years old and then started to pursue a career as an artist, which means that since 1994, he has appreciated our exhibitions for more than a quarter of a century. Since he moved the base of his artistic activities to Mito in 2007, he has steadily built up a collaborative relationship with Art Tower Mito as both an audience member and an artist. For this occasion, focusing on the method he has been employing recently, we invite him for his first museum solo exhibition. As the solo exhibition is in his hometown, his latest work produced for this exhibition and specifically about Mito is the highlight of the exhibition.

### ② **Presentation of Nakazaki's latest work with the themes of Mito and Art Tower Mito**

In recent years, Nakazaki has been producing literary installations about specific sites' history and characteristics by interviewing relevant people and composing a story with a unique perspective, using the extracted words. For this new exhibition, with the motifs of Mito and Art Tower Mito, he conducted interviews with five people who have connections to Mito and Art Tower Mito and researched literature about the founding of Art Tower Mito to conjure up "another story" about them. The interviews include one with his parents by Nakazaki, giving it a sense of autobiography, and making it a milestone work that was possible only in his hometown.

### ③ **Element of retrospective tracing Tohru Nakazaki's artistic activities, from his early to recent works**

This exhibition has an element of retrospective, presenting a trajectory of Nakazaki's activities from his early works to his recent ones. From *signmaker NAKAZAKI*, his representative work, through paintings, drawings, recompositions of past installations, and three-dimensional works with acrylic colors and fluorescent lights to his new installation about Mito—featuring both new and old works, the exhibition presents a comprehensive picture of the artist Tohru Nakazaki.

### ④ **New orders are available for his representative work *signmaker NAKAZAKI*, as the artist will conduct open production**

At the gallery located at the end of the exhibition venue, during the first half of the exhibition period, production of new pieces of *signmaker NAKAZAKI* will take place, open to the public. Orders for signboards as Nakazaki's works will be collected beforehand. Then after a dialog between the client and the contractor—Nakazaki—the actual signboard will be produced. During the latter half of the exhibition period, the completed collection of signboards will be exhibited.

## ▼ Related Programs

### Artist Talk

Centered on his latest work made for this exhibition, Tohru Nakazaki talks about the exhibition and his activities.

Moderator: Yuu Takehisa (curator of the exhibition, Artistic Director of Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito)

Date: Saturday, November 5, 14:00-15:30

Venue: Art Tower Mito

Capacity: 40 persons \*reservation required. First-come, first-served basis/Reservation opens on October 10.

Fee: free \*exhibition ticket is required.

### **New orders for *signmaker NAKAZAKI* available. Orders wanted for open production**

Orders for signs to be put up in this exhibition will be available. Existing company names, imaginary shop names, your favorite quote, or message to someone—Nakazaki will work on orders by customers as his works, completing them as signboards with a twist. Open production will be conducted as well. For details, please refer to our website.

Dates: Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays (except for Nov. 13) between November 6-20

Venue: Contemporary Art Gallery

Capacity: 24 persons \*reservation required. First-come, first-served basis/Reservation opens on October 10.

Fee: ¥1,100 \*exhibition ticket is also required.

\*Open production will be conducted on an irregular basis between Sunday, November 6 and Tuesday, December 20. During this period, on the days noted above, there will be two-person interviews at the venue between Nakazaki, the contractor, and the customer.

### ***Project FUKUSHIMA!*: Documentary Film Screening and Talk**

Dates: Saturday, December 3, \*screening only, starting at 15:00

Sunday, December 4, 14:00-16:30

With Otomo Yoshihide (musician), one of the founders of *Project FUKUSHIMA!*, and Hikaru Fujii (artist), director of the documentary film on the project, as guests, talks will be presented about Nakazaki's role in the project and how it developed.

Venue: Art Tower Mito

Capacity: 40 persons \*Reservation required. First-come, first-served basis/ Reservation opens on November 5.

Fee: ¥500 \*exhibition ticket is also required.

### **Nadegata Instant Party: Screening and Talk**

Guests Tomoko Noda (art manager) and Daisuke Yamashiro (artist), two people who work with Nakazaki as Nadegata Instant Party, will look back on *The Last Work of Curator A*, a video work produced in 2009 for an exhibition in Art Tower Mito, seeking to uncover the essence of Tohru Nakazaki.

Date: Saturday, January 14, 14:00-16:00

Venue: Art Tower Mito

Capacity: 40 persons \*Reservation required. First-come, first-served basis/Reservation opens on November 5.

Fee: free \*exhibition ticket is required.

## ▼Related Education Programs

### Gallery tour with a person with visual impairment “session!” Special Edition

Since 2010, Art Tower Mito has been organizing gallery tours with a blind art appreciator, Kenji Shiratori, as the navigator, where people with sight and without sight talk together while appreciating the exhibition. This time, we will organize a special edition featuring a free talk with Tohru Nakazaki after the gallery tour.

Dates: Sunday, December 11 and 18, 10:00-12:30/14:30-17:00

Venue: Contemporary Art Gallery

Capacity: 5 persons per session \*decided by drawing

Application period: Saturday, October 8 - Sunday, November 6

Fee: ¥1,500, which includes exhibition admission.

### Weekend Gallery Talk

CAC (Contemporary Art Center) gallery volunteer talkers guide visitors to explore the exhibition together.

Dates: Saturdays from November 19 onwards, starting at 15:30, approx. 40min.

Venue: Contemporary Art Gallery

Fee: free \*exhibition ticket is required.

## 【Other Projects during the exhibition period】

### ■ Criterium 99 Hiroko Enomoto

For the 99th exhibition of the series Criterium, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito is pleased to introduce the work of Hiroko Enomoto. Enomoto creates work on the themes of vulnerability and the process of repairing, found in everyday experiences such as encountering and interacting with others.

Since the beginning of her career, Enomoto has presented spatial installations composed of drawings, texts, photographs, videos, and other various media. More recently, she has also developed her interests in materials such as herbs and beeswax, which are used to heal wounds, and has incorporated them into her work and activities.

In this exhibition, Enomoto will present a body of new work that embraces vulnerabilities and memories that are overlooked while prioritizing productivity and consumption, and turns our eyes to the process of accepting that arises through the passage of time and the act of caring.

Website: <http://hirokoenomoto.com/>

Dates: Saturday, November 5 – Sunday, January 29, 2023

Venue: Gallery 9, Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito

Fee: included in the admission of the Tohru Nakazaki exhibition.

Organized by: Mito Arts Foundation

Curated by: Oko Goto (Curator, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito)

\*Criterium comes from the Latin “criterion,” which means a standard. Every exhibition is formed jointly by the artist and the curator.

## NOTES

### CONTACT

Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito

1-6-8, Goken-cho, Mito City, Ibaraki, 310-0063, Japan

Tel: +81 (0)29 227 8120 / Fax: +81 (0)29 227 8130 <https://arttowermito.or.jp/>

Regarding the exhibition, contact Yuu Takehisa (Artistic Director, Contemporary Art Center, Art Tower Mito).

Regarding educational programs, contact Junko Moriyama, Yoshihiro Nakagawa (Educational program coordinators)

For public relations and publicity of photographs, contact Kaori Torii (PR).

Email: [cacpr@arttowermito.or.jp](mailto:cacpr@arttowermito.or.jp)

Information is available on ATM twitter account [http://twitter.com/MITOGEI\\_Gallery](http://twitter.com/MITOGEI_Gallery)

Requests regarding publication of information:

1. Please make sure to use the official title of the exhibition, along with the exhibition dates.
2. When using photographs, please put captions, credits and any other information attached to a photograph adjacent to the photo.
3. The phone number of Art Tower Mito to be published is 029-227-8111 only.
4. Please send Kaori Torii a copy of the VTR, newspaper or magazine for our archives.
5. For interviews with an artist or to photograph the exhibition, please contact Kaori Torii in advance. Requests may not be accepted under some circumstances.

### ACCESS

Train:

Take the Limited Express on the Joban Line from Ueno Station (also from Shinagawa and Tokyo Station), Tokyo, and get off at Mito Station. The Express runs every 30 min. The ride takes 65-85 min.

From Mito Station, take a bus from stop no. 4, 5, 6 or 7 at the North Exit bus terminal and get off at "Izumi-cho 1-chome," the fourth stop. Walk toward the direction of the Mito station and cross the street (route #50) on the first crossing. Walk ahead in a narrow lane in parallel to the crossing. It is a 2-min. walk to Art Tower Mito.

For details, please contact East Japan Railway Company (JR). Tel: 029-221-2836 <http://www.jreast.co.jp/>

Highway Bus:

Take a highway bus bound for Mito (via Akatsuka route or Ibarakidaigaku route) from the stop No. 4 at the highway bus terminal located at the Yaesu South Gate of Tokyo station. The ride takes approx. 100 min. Get off at the "Izumi-cho 1-chome" stop. It is a 2-min. walk to ATM.

For details, contact Ibaraki Kotsu (Transport). Tel: 029-251-2331 <http://www.ibako.co.jp/>

Car:

Get off at Mito IC on Joban Highway, and drive toward the city center on the route #50 for about 20 min. ATM is on the crossing of route #349. Pay parking is available on the basement level of Art Tower Mito. The gate is on the north side of the east end of the ATM building. Free for 30 min., ¥200 for an hour and ¥100 for every additional 30 min. Open from 7:00 to 23:00. For highway tolls and routes, please refer to E-NEXCO Drive Plaza "DoRaPuRa."

Tel: 0570-024-024 <http://www.driveplaza.com/>

**【Press Image Stock】** The images are available for press purpose. Please contact Torii at the office.

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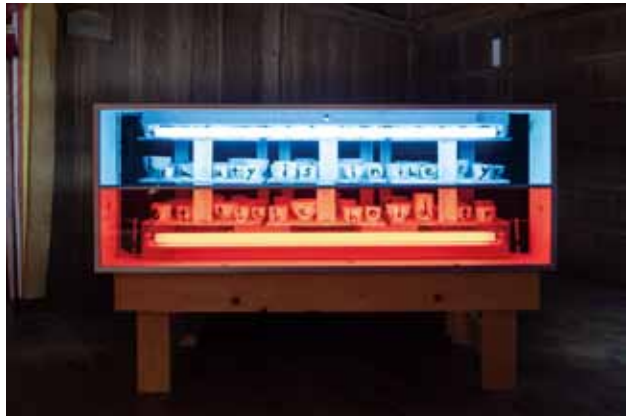
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1. Tohru Nakazaki, *color or white*, 2007. Photo: Masaru Yanagiba
2. Tohru Nakazaki, "Poolside Snowman" installation view, 2021. Photo: Yusuke Monma
3. Referential image: Tohru Nakazaki, *Peach Beach, Summer School*, 2019. Photo: Izuru Echigoya
4. Tohru Nakazaki, *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder*, 2021. Photo: Masaru Yanagiba
5. Tohru Nakazaki, *welcome girl*, 2020. Photo: Kenji Otani
6. Tohru Nakazaki, *DANGER MINES!*, 2002. Photo: Masaru Yanagiba