

The National Art Center, Tokyo, to Host “muscon Tokyo 2026,” the First International Conference in Asia in 14 Years



©The National Art Center, Tokyo

The National Art Center, Tokyo will host **muscon Tokyo 2026**, an international conference held from May 27 to 29, 2026. The conference brings together museum professionals involved in the planning and production of exhibitions worldwide, with a focus on design and architecture, while also encompassing a broad range of fields including art, culture, and science.

muscon (*Museum Network Conference*; www.muscon.org) was initiated in 1996 by the Vitra Design Museum in Germany. It is held twice annually in cities primarily across Europe and America, bringing together approximately 50–100 participants from around the world. muscon Tokyo 2026 marks the first conference to be held in Asia since Hong Kong in 2012.

On Friday, May 29, a public talk will be held as part of muscon Tokyo 2026, offering an opportunity for muscon participants and the general public to engage in dialogue. The talk will feature Mateo Kries, Director of the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, internationally recognized as a pioneer in the field of design museums; Ikko Yokoyama, Head of Design and Architecture at M+, one of Asia’s leading museums of visual culture in Hong Kong; and Brendan Cormier, Chief Curator of V&A East, the most recent and widely recognized example for its innovative concept in England. They will be joined by Tomio Sugaya, who assumed the directorship of the National Art Center, Tokyo on April 1, 2026.

Through perspectives from Europe, Asia, and Japan, the speakers will discuss the significance and role of collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting design and architecture within contemporary museums.

muscon Tokyo 2026

Date Wednesday May 27 to Friday May 29, 2026
*An optional group trip to Kanazawa on Saturday May 30 and Sunday May 31.
Organized by The National Art Center, Tokyo; Vitra Design Museum
Supported by The Japanese Council of Art Museums
Collaboration with MoN Takanawa: Museum of Narratives, Tokyo Gendai

[Conference Program]

Wednesday May 27 Guided tour of museums in Tokyo
Thursday May 28 Conference Day 1 (10 min presentations by participating institutions)
Speed meeting
Friday May 29 Conference Day 2 (10 min presentations by participating institutions)
“Hanae Mori Vital Type: The 100th Anniversary of Birth” Special Visit

Public Talk “Presenting Design, Collecting Architecture: Museum Practices in a Global Context”

Date Friday May 29, 2026 17:30~19:00 (Doors open at 17:00)
Venue Auditorium, The National Art Center, Tokyo
Organized by The National Art Center, Tokyo
In cooperation with Vitra Co., Ltd.
Speakers Mateo Kries (Director, Vitra Design Museum)
Ikko Yokoyama (Senior Curator and Head of Design and Architecture, M+)
Brendan Cormier (V&A East Chief Curator)
Tomio Sugaya (Director General, The National Art Center, Tokyo; Special
Advisor, Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka)
Moderator Miryon Ko (Senior Manager, International Projects, The National Art Center, Tokyo)
Capacity 100
Language Japanese, English (Simultaneous translation available)

Exhibition “Hanae Mori Vital Type: The 100th Anniversary of Birth”

Date April 15 to July 6, 2026
Closed on Tuesdays (*Opens on May 5)
Time 10:00~18:00 (~20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)
Venue Special Exhibition Gallery 1E
Organized by The National Art Center, Tokyo; TV Asahi Corporation; The Tokyo Shimbun
With the Special Cooperation of Hanae Mori Office, HANAЕ MORI FOUNDATION
With the Cooperation of Iwami Art Museum
With the Sponsorship of DAI-DAN CO., LTD



Photo: Bernhald Strauss

Mateo Kries

Mateo Kries has been director of the Vitra Design Museum since 2011. He holds a PhD in art history from Humboldt University in Berlin and has been working as a curator of the Vitra Design Museum since 1995. Kries' work as a museum director, writer and curator revolves around contemporary design in the context of social change, sustainability, diversity, and innovation. He has widely published and lectured about these topics, as well as about the history of design and architecture in the 20th century. Kries is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and holds an Honorary Professorship at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe.



Photo: Zaref Khan

Ikko Yokoyama

Ikko Yokoyama is the Senior Curator and Head of Design and Architecture at M+, Asia's global museum of contemporary visual culture, in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District. Since joining M+ in 2016, she has played a pivotal role in building its foundational Design and Architecture collection and developing various exhibitions and public programmes. Additionally, she is the Co-President of the International Confederation of Architectural Museums (ICAM) and serves on the advisory panel of CHAT (Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textiles) in Hong Kong.

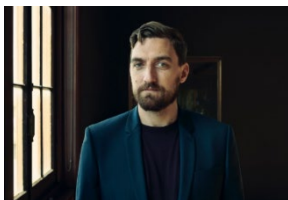


Photo: Sebastian Nevols

Brendan Cormier

Brendan Cormier is the Chief Curator of V&A East, comprising both Storehouse and V&A East Museum, two new sites on the Olympic Park in London. Over the last 11 years at the V&A he has curated several projects, including the V&A Gallery at Design Society in Shenzhen, *A World of Fragile Parts* (2016) and *On Storage* (2025) for the Venice Architecture Biennale, *Cars: Accelerating the Modern World* (2019) at V&A South Kensington, and *Photo City: How Image Shaped the Urban World* (2024) for V&A Dundee.



Tomio Sugaya

Born in Chiba Prefecture in 1958. Served as curator at the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park and at the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art Planning Office before being appointed as head of the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka Planning Office in 2017. Has held his current position since 2019. In charge of supervising the establishment of the new museum, as well as the fields of modern design, photography, and contemporary art. Also actively engaged in criticism and commentary in these fields. Has organized major exhibitions, including *Discovering Osaka, City of Art* (1997) and *The Age of Hayakawa Yoshio* (2002). Co-authored books include *Approaches to Urban Design* (1998) and *Critical Words for Design History* (2006). Director General of the National Art Center, Tokyo, since April 1st, 2026. Serves as Special Advisor to the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka.



About muscon

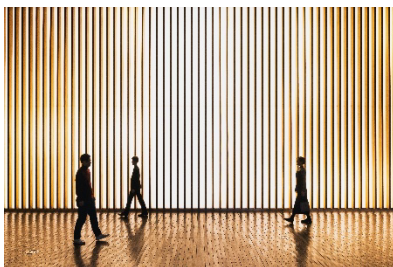
Since 1996, the Vitra Design Museum has organized the international muscon conference in cooperation with annually changing local hosts. The aim of this conference is to promote the international exchange of travelling exhibitions and other collaborative initiatives among museum professionals and decision makers. Outside of Europe muscon is also regularly held in the United States and Asia-Pacific. The muscon network has brought together several hundred institutions and contributed significantly to further a productive exchange of travelling exhibitions in the international museum landscape.



Vitra Design Museum, Frank Gehry, 1989,
© Vitra Design Museum, photo: Thomas Dix

About Vitra Design Museum

The Vitra Design Museum numbers among the world's leading museums of design. It is dedicated to the research and presentation of design, past and present, and examines design's relationship to architecture, art and everyday culture. In the main museum building by Frank Gehry, the museum annually mounts two major temporary exhibitions.



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About The National Art Center, Tokyo

The National Art Center, Tokyo (NACT) was the fifth institution to be established as part of the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum of Art. Our mission is to make a contribution to culture through art in order to achieve mutual understanding and coexistence. While we do not have a permanent collection, since opening in 2007, we have constantly worked to become an art center that enables people from various regions and countries to experience a wide range of artistic expressions, acquire knowledge, and encounter diverse values.

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