

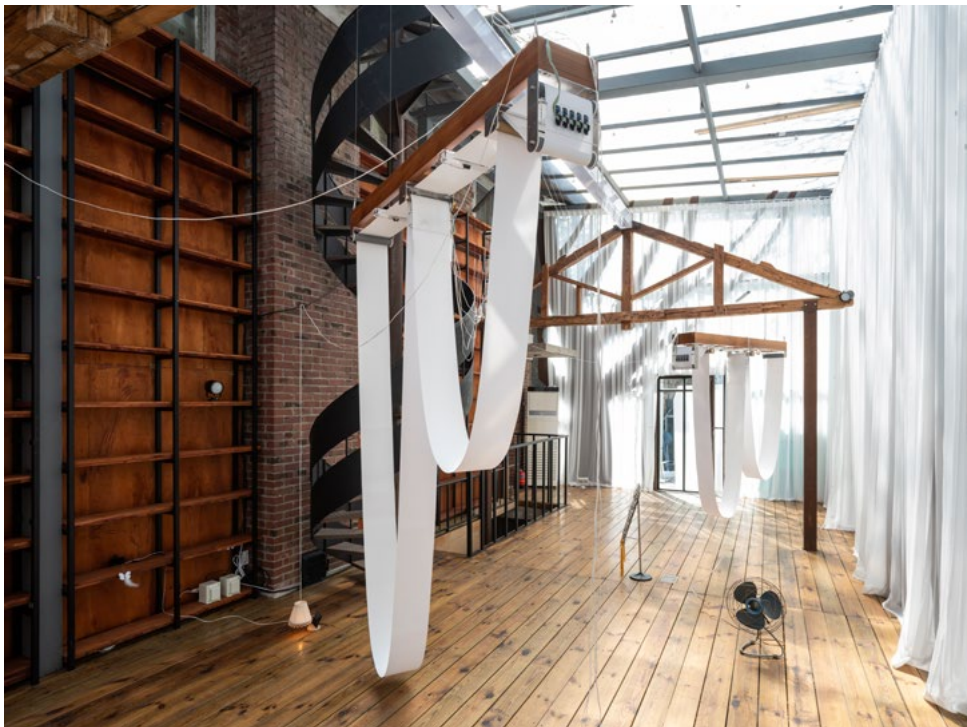
Gordon, Brynn, *Japan names 2024 Venice Biennale Artist and Curator*, artasiapacific, 13 June 2023



NEWS JUN 13, 2023

Japan Names 2024 Venice Biennale Artist and Curator

BY BRYNN GORDON



Installation view of **YUKO MOHRI**'s *I/O*, 2011-2023, multimedia installation, dimensions variable, at The 14th Gwangju Biennale. Photo by kugeyasuhide. Courtesy the artist, Project Fulfill Art Space, Taipei; mother's tankstation Dublin | London

The Japan Foundation announced on June 12 that installation and video artist Yuko Mohri will exhibit in the Japan Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale in 2024. The exhibition will be overseen by Sook-Kyung Lee, senior curator of international art at the Tate Modern. An official title has yet to be announced, but the exhibition will explore environmental themes and the relationship between creativity and crisis.

Born in 1980 in Kanagawa, Yuko Mohri creates installations that act as artistic ecosystems, reflecting shifts in the environment such as responding to the movement of crowds, wind, or temperature. This approach was evident at the 14th Gwangju Biennale in 2023 where she restaged her work *I/O* (2011–23) by incorporating materials gathered from around the Korean city, creating a delicate installation of unrolled printer paper hung from above and pearl-adorned lampshades inspired by Han Kang's novel *The White Book* (2016). The coming and going of visitors, an electric fan, and the natural environment of Gwangju caused these elements to move, reflecting the life of the city around it.

This focus on the relationship between art and the environment will be expanded in the upcoming Japan Pavilion, where Mohri will draw on references to the Covid-19 pandemic and Venice's debilitating floods in 2019 as well as controversies over recent climate-crisis demonstrations to show that the question of "Which is more valuable, art or life?" presents a false binary, as that these concepts are inexorably linked. This will be reflected in her plans to connect decaying fruit to electrodes to synthesize spontaneous, natural arrangements of sound and light, turning the pavilion into a fully immersive sensory environment.

The selection jury member and director of the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Akira Tatehata

stated in the selection announcement: “The merging of vegetable life with electrical technology is highly relevant to issues that are of growing concern to us all today.” Mohri herself said of her upcoming exhibition that she senses, “the beginning of a fresh era of response to global challenges,” and said she “wants to present an innovative vision that opens a new path to the future.” The pavilion’s curator Sook-Kyung Lee said of Mohri: “Her work makes us see not just objects but their environment and . . . its ambience and voids.”

The Japan Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is overseen by the Japan Foundation, a government-affiliated organization dedicated to promoting Japanese culture. In 2023, the Japan Foundation chose curators Maki Onishi and Yuki Hyakuda’s project “Architecture, a place to be loved – when architecture is seen as a living creature” to represent the country in the Venice Biennale’s 18th International Architecture Exhibition, which approached architecture as a changing, living organism connected to its surroundings. This suggests a growing preference within the Japan Foundation for a pavilion that focuses on the thematic relationship between art, architecture, and the environment.

The 60th Venice Biennale opens on April 20 and will run through to November 24, 2024.