

September 28, 2026

Press Release

Keio University

Keio University Art Center to Host
SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra-3
Motohiro Tomii: Conditions of the Figure

SHOW-CASE project No. 5
Motohiro Tomii: Unit of the Figure

(October 5 – December 18, 2026)

Keio University Art Center (KUAC) regularly organizes exhibitions of contemporary art, motivated by the conviction that universities should create opportunities for younger generations to come into contact with a diverse range of perspectives, as seen in the works of artists active in the present day.

In 2024, the Art Center initiated *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra*, a three-year exhibition series with Motohiro Tomii, an artist known for his readymades that shine new light on objects otherwise overlooked in quotidian life. The first installment, *The Presence of Objects and Matters*, paired Tomii's signature readymade interventions with cast plaster forms. The second, *Conditions of Contact*, featured new and old works, foregrounded with measuring rulers. For the third and final installment, the series now culminates in *Conditions of the Figure*, testing how even a compact gallery room can challenge the act of perception and generate a new kind of artistic "event."

Concurrently, the Art Center will also host *SHOW-CASE project No.5 Motohiro Tomii: Unit of the Figure*. The exhibition has been staged within a single display case, marking a circular return to the format that launched the broader *Extra* series. Will the two exhibitions work in concert or stand in juxtaposition? We cordially invite the public to discover the dialogue that emerges between these two exhibitions: one unfolding within a single display case, the other expanding to fill an entire gallery room.

1. Exhibition Details

Dates: October 5 (Mon.) – December 18 (Fri.), 2026

Closed | Saturdays, Sundays, Public Holidays, November 2 (Mon.), and November 16 (Mon.)

Special Opening | October 31 (Sat.) and November 14 (Sat.)

Hours: 11:00–18:00

Location: Keio University Art Center (KUAC) 1F Art Space of South Annex, Mita Campus

Admission: Free

Hosted and organized by the Keio University Art Center (KUAC)

Please refer to the website for the latest information:

http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/news-events/event-archive/motohiro_tomii_2026-2/

2. Exhibition Overview

Keio University Art Center (KUAC) regularly organizes exhibitions of contemporary art, motivated by the conviction that universities should create opportunities for younger generations to come into contact with a diverse range of perspectives and the insights their work offers on the present day.

In 2024, the Art Center initiated *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra*, a three-year exhibition series with Motohiro Tomii, an artist known for his readymades that offer a unique new way of looking at everyday objects.

The title *SHOW-CASE* is a double entendre that refers to the physical display case itself, but can also be understood as the act of showing or demonstrating a case in point, thus calling attention to a specific approach or stance. Tomii previously worked with the Art Center to develop the prototype for the *SHOW-CASE project*, proposing a single showcase as a conceptual frame to draw out a range of approaches. Could the Art Center's 45-square-meter gallery space or perhaps the exhibition format itself similarly function as a showcase? These questions subsequently grew into the *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra*, as an offshoot of the original project.

The inaugural installment of the three-year project, *The Presence of Objects and Matters*, paired Tomii's signature readymade interventions with cast plaster forms. The second, *Conditions of Contact*, brought together earlier and more recent works made with rulers. The project now culminates in its third and final installment, *Conditions of the Figure*. Together, the three exhibitions interrogate the relationship between artwork and gallery space, calling into question the very framework of the exhibition itself.

An art exhibition is an "event" bounded in time and space. An exhibition's ephemerality is part of its appeal. This series seeks to find out what new possibilities might emerge when a typically transient event is stretched out over a continuum of three years. In this way, the organizers have attempted to reframe the concept of what constitutes an "event" from the confines of a small exhibition room.

Concurrently, the Art Center will host *SHOW-CASE project No. 5 Motohiro Tomii: Unit of the Figure*, the solitary display case that inspired the *Extra* series. One exhibition unfolds within a lone display case, while the other expands to fill an entire gallery room. Will the two exhibitions resonate in concert or stand in juxtaposition? We cordially invite the public to discover what happens when the two come into contact.

SHOW-CASE project:

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/research/research-projects/show-case-project/>

SHOW-CASE project No.5 Motohiro Tomii: Units of the Figure:

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/news-events/event-archive/show-case-project-no-5/>

Artist Statement

People have a tendency to project some kind of figure onto whatever is before their eyes—whether it is something tangible or something only vaguely imagined in the mind. Even when indistinct, a figure remains a figure. Even without a prior image, something can still emerge that can only be described as a figure. To dismiss this simply as “existence” seems to overlook something essential.

Rather than being drawn towards its elusive centre, why not instead approach the conditions of the figure from its periphery? Rather than treating the figure itself as the object of enquiry, the focus shifts to the conditions through which a figure comes into being. It is perhaps here that the meaning of making things lies. Motohiro Tomii

3. Artist Bio

Motohiro Tomii

Born in 1973 in Niigata Prefecture, Tomii graduated from the Musashino Art University with an MA in Fine Art (Sculpture) and is currently a professor at Musashino Art University. His career evolution is marked by an initial period of creating diminutive plaster figures, after which he transitioned to assembling three-dimensional works from an eclectic array of household objects such as superballs, clips, pencils, and hammers.

Employing straightforward techniques like arranging, layering, binding, and folding, Tomii releases these objects from their original meanings and uses, thereby persistently seeking novel modalities of sculpture. In addition to sharing “Today’s Sculpture” daily on X (previously Twitter), the artist also undertakes efforts to critically assess traditional exhibition venues and frameworks.

Major exhibitions include ‘Yokohama Triennale 2011: OUR MAGIC HOUR – How Much of the World Can We Know?’ (Yokohama Museum of Art/BankART Studio NYK, 2011), ‘MOT Annual 2011: Nearest Faraway’ (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2011), ‘Artist File 2015 Next Doors:

Contemporary Art in Japan and Korea’ (The National Art Center, Tokyo/National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea), and ‘Re construction’ (Nerima Art Museum, 2020). In 2023,

the artist appeared in several solo exhibitions, ‘Time to See’ (Niigata City Art Museum) and ‘Motohiro Tomii: Sculptures’ (Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts).

Website: <http://tomiimotohiro.com>

4. Press Images and Works on View

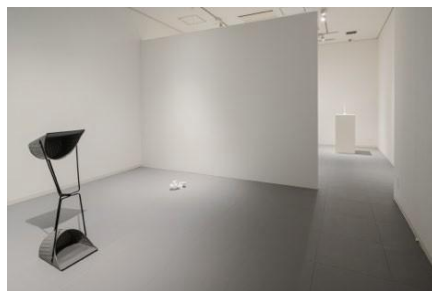
- a. Motohiro Tomii, *four hammers* (2017), hammers. *Acts that Give New Value*, clinic. (Reference image) © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates
Photo: Michiko Ishikawa.
- b. *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra-1 Motohiro Tomii: The Presence of Objects and Matters*. (Installation view) Photo: Masaru Yanagiba © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates

- c. *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra-1 Motohiro Tomii: The Presence of Objects and Matters.* (Installation view) Photo: Masaru Yanagiba © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates
- d. Motohiro Tomii, *measure* (2009), tape measure. (Reference image)
Photo: Masaru Yanagiba © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates
- e. *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra-2 Motohiro Tomii: Conditions of Contact.* (Installation view)
Photo: Masaru Yanagiba © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates
- f. *SHOW-CASE PROJECT Extra-2 Motohiro Tomii: Conditions of Contact.* (Installation view)
Photo: Masaru Yanagiba © Motohiro Tomii, Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates

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b.



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5. Related Events

Workshop

Date: Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Instructor: Motohiro Tomii

SHOW-CASE project Panel Discussion

Date: Saturday, Nov. 7, 2026

Time: 2:00–4:00 p.m.

*Attendees will be invited to view the exhibitions following the talk.

Speakers: Motohiro Tomii (artist)

Nobuhiro Shimura (artist)

Tatsuo Kawaguchi (contemporary artist)

Toshihiko Arimoto (art installer)

Tadao Kawamura (designer)

Panel Discussion

Date: Nov. 14, 2026

Time: 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Speakers: Motohiro Tomii

Takayuki Hayashi (professor, Department of Aesthetics and Art History,
Tokyo University of the Arts)

Gen Umezu (critic and curator)

Yohko Watanabe (professor & curator, Keio University Art Center)

*Schedule is subject to change without notice.

*More details will be released on the website as they become available.

http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/news-events/event-archive/motohiro_tomii_2026-2/

Takayuki Hayashi

Art criticism. Recent contributions include “‘Readymade’: Industrial Products, Found Objects, General Goods or ‘les sculptures toutes faites’”, Tomii, Fujii, and Yamamoto (eds.), *Textbook for Sculptures 2*, “*Sculptures full of unknowns*”, Vol. 2. *View Sculptures*, Musashino Art University Press, 2024. (text in Japanese)

Gen Umezu

Critic and curator. Recent projects include: To Be Being Seen: Exploring Artistic Expression in Moving Image Works from the 1960s to Today in Japan at Art Osaka in the Osaka City Central Public Hall (2025) and Tomoyuki Higuchi DUB/stance at The White (2024). As curator for the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, he organized the 1999 exhibition DONALD JUDD selected works 1960-1991 among other projects. The museum featured Motohiro Tomii’s work in their 2009 exhibition New Vision Saitama III.

Yohko Watanabe

Professor and Curator at the Keio University Art Center, specializing in modern and contemporary art history. Before joining Keio, Watanabe worked as a curator at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. Her practice brings together research and archival work with exhibitions and workshops, including the “Tokyo Biennale ’70” research project. She has also curated contemporary art exhibitions such as the *Standing Point* series. In 2014, she invited Motohiro Tomii to collaborate with the Art Center on the inaugural *SHOW-CASE project*.

6. Access

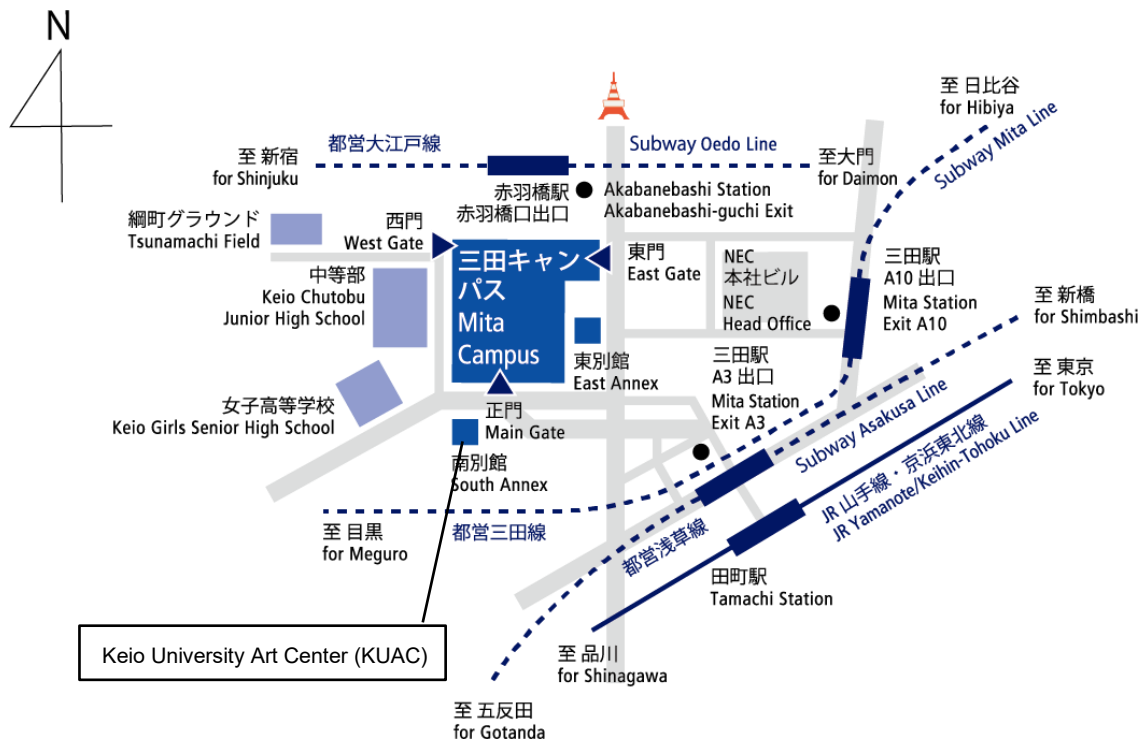
Location: Keio University Art center 1F Art Space of South Annex, Mita Campus

Address: 2-15-45 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 108-8345

Access: 8-minute walk from Tamachi Station (JR Yamanote Line/JR Keihin-Tohoku Line)

7-minute walk from Mita Station (Toei Subway Asakusa Line/Mita Line)

8-minute walk from Akabanebashi Station (Toei Subway Oedo Line)



*Members of the press are kindly requested to contact the Office of Communications and Public Relations in advance to arrange coverage.

*This release has been distributed to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Press Club, as well as to the society and culture desks of major media organizations.

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