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Female creators
design our future

FROM THE EDITOR

By YOSHIKUNI SHIRAI / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Readers will likely have heard of the Gender Gap Index, which quantifies otherwise invisible disparities between men and women. Published annually since 2006 by the nonprofit World Economic Forum, the index captures gender imbalances in countries around the world in areas such as the economy, education and politics. One of the most closely watched statistics is the annual

ranking of countries for their gender equality.

The latest index was published in July. Iceland ranked first, Finland second and Norway third, while Japan ranked 116th out of a total of 146 countries. In East Asia, Japan was more than 10 places lower than neighboring South Korea (99th) and China (103rd). In Japan, the gender gap is particularly acute in the fields of the economy

and politics, where it lags far behind from other countries.

In this context, this month's special feature focuses on women who could become future leaders in closing the gender gap. Four female creators are introduced: a photographer and film director, an architect, a chef and a contemporary artist. I sincerely hope that their activities will have a positive impact on Japanese society.

「ジェンダー・ギャップ指数」という、男女間の格差という目に見えない要素を数値化したものがあります。これは<世界経済フォーラム>が2006年から毎年公表しているもので、経済・教育・政治参加などの分野で、世界各国の男女間の不均衡を数値で示しています。なかでも皆が一番関心を向け注目しているのが、各国の数値をランキング形式で発表していることでしょう。

最新の指数は今年7月に公表されました。1位アイスラ

ンド、2位フィンランド、3位ノルウェーと続き、日本は146か国中116位。日本の場合は特に経済と政治の分野での男女格差が目立ち、かなり遅れています。

そんな日本社会にあって、ジェンダー・ギャップを解消するリーダーとなりえる女性たちにスポットを当ててみたのが今回の特集です。4名の女性クリエイターを紹介していますが、彼女たちの活躍が日本社会に良きインパクトを与えることを願ってやみません。



MIKA NINAGAWA

Focusing primarily on photography, Ninagawa has created many films, videos and spatial installations. Among the many awards she has won is the Kimura Ihei Award. In 2010, Rizzoli New York published a book of her photographs. Ninagawa has made five feature films, including “Helter Skelter” (2012) and “Diner” (2019), and also directed the Netflix original series “Followers.” Her most recent photo book is “Mika Ninagawa: A Garden of Flickering Lights.” Her major solo exhibitions encompass “Mika Ninagawa” at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Taipei (2016), the traveling exhibition “Mika Ninagawa: Into Fiction/Reality,” which visited a number of Japanese art museums (2018-2021), “Mika Ninagawa: Into Fiction/Reality” at the Beijing Times Art Museum (2022) and “Mika Ninagawa: A Garden of Flickering Lights” at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum (2022). Her website is <https://mikaninagawa.com>.



Director Mika Ninagawa on set while shooting the film “Diner” (2019). © MIKA NINAGAWA / “DINER” FILM PARTNERS

Feature WOMEN'S CREATIVITY

ARTIST / FILM DIRECTOR

Mika Ninagawa: Expressions of vivid transience

By KAORU TASHIRO

Mika Ninagawa has won the acclaim of a wide-ranging audience as one of contemporary Japan's leading photographers and film directors. She consistently captures intense yet ephemeral moments of life, like sparks of vivid color.

The daughter of eminent stage and film director Yukio Ninagawa, she has been driven since early childhood by a desire bordering on obsession to prove herself as a person in her own right, not merely Yukio Ninagawa's daughter. While outrage long was the motivating force behind her creativity, a dramatic change has taken place in her inner landscape over the last few years, she says. How did she start taking the photographs that established the name of Mika Ninagawa, and what direction does she now intend to take in her expressive work? We talked to her at her Tokyo studio.

“Since I was very young, I've wanted to find the answer to the question ‘Who am I?’ I think one influence was growing up in an unconventional family environment, with a director for a father and an actress for a mother,” she said. “I well remember the momentary excitement I felt as a first-year undergraduate, studying graphic design at an art university, the first time one of my photographs was chosen for inclusion in an exhibition open to submissions from the public and I was called an artist. I felt as though I'd been liberated from something at last.”

For Ninagawa, being a photographer was perhaps not simply an occupation, but the best means of expressing what was inside her, so she could become herself.

“In the world of photography in the mid-1990s, when I started out, shots so



The video piece “Seasons: Flight of Butterflies”(2022) was displayed as part of Ninagawa's exhibition “A Garden of Flickering Lights” at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum. Working with a team of creators, Ninagawa turned videos she had shot into a single piece.

COURTESY: MIKA NINAGAWA

● Summary

蜷川実花の作品がもつ、鮮烈な色彩と夢さの秘密。

現代日本を代表する写真家、映画監督として幅広い層から支持される蜷川実花。彼女が捉え続けるのは鮮烈な色彩がスパークするような、激しくも儚い生の一瞬である。蜷川実花は演出家、蜷川幸雄の長女として生まれ、幼少期から著名演出家の娘ではなく「私自身になる」という強い意志で、大学在学中に写真家としてデビューを果

たした。以来「怒り」を創作の原動力にしてきたという。そんな彼女から見えてきたのは、いたってセンシティブな表現者としての横顔だ。「怒り」のルーツは、男女の不平等、作品を見る前から否定してくるパブリックに向けて表現していくことの難しさ。蜷川は「表現者は幸せであってはいけない、という呪い」を自身にかけていた。

そんな蜷川が変わるきっかけは2016年頃、父を失う時期に起こった。「亡くなっていく父の視線」で世界の異なる風景を見、瞬間の輝きを捉える経験をした。「人生で初めて、素晴らしいものにフォーカスして表現しているのだ」と感じた蜷川。彼女の新たな表現とこれから出会うことができる私たちはとても幸運だ。



日本語全文はこちらから

out of focus that you couldn't tell what was depicted were anathema. When I won a major prize, even though my exhibition attracted the highest-ever number of visitors, I was dogged nonetheless by hurtful comments about my shots being out of focus and that they didn't even deserve to be called photographs."

Talking about this memory, she revealed her highly sensitive side as an artist.

Outrage was the motivating force behind what she expressed, Ninagawa said. At the root of this anger was the atmosphere in Japan at the time.

"I was furious about the inequality between men and women, about the idea that you couldn't do certain things or had to put up with being told certain things because you were a woman. I want to be an artist who creates work with breadth, that anyone can access, rather than producing pieces for a limited range of people, such as a handful of art lovers or the wealthy. However, audiences sometimes reject my work before even actually seeing it. That's the difficulty of producing expressive work for the public, and I have a kind of love-hate relationship with it. Now I think it's fine just to enjoy my life without digging my heels in about it. But when I was young, I was cursed by the idea that I mustn't enrich my lifestyle or be satisfied or happy," she said with a laugh.

Ninagawa's photographic works are often a mixture of the fictional and the real. For example, some of her works feature photographs of artificial flowers. Why does she choose to take pictures of artificial flowers rather than real ones?

"From my early childhood, because I lived in a home with a director for a father, who lived in the worlds of both fiction and reality, I thought that was just the way the world was. I've shot artificial flowers in the sense of something fictional. While they're fake flowers, I see them as having taken shape from someone's desire to create flowers that won't die. I often shoot artificial flowers left as offerings on graves in Mexico and other hot countries. When I feel the emotions inspiring people to leave offerings to the dead of flowers that won't wither, there is a moment when they look even more beautiful than the real thing. I feel that fictitious doesn't equal fake."

The photographs in the recent exhibition "Mika Ninagawa: A Garden of Flickering Lights" at the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum all featured fresh flowers. She says it was only after she had finished taking the photographs that she realized all the flowers were in places created by someone to display flowers,



The Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum is housed in a refurbished art deco-style building originally constructed in 1933 as the residence of Prince Yasuhiko Asaka. Eighty of Ninagawa's works were displayed there at her 2022 exhibition. COURTESY: MIKA NINAGAWA

such as a flower bed, garden, avenue of cherry trees or flower park. Over the last few years, something in Ninagawa has changed. She says she began to feel there were limits to what she could express when motivated by anger alone. And Ninagawa herself was startled by the change that occurred as her anger melted away.

"I'm powerfully drawn to the ephemeral and the momentary, to things that sparkle for a fleeting instant. The pandemic has made us all realize that nothing lasts forever, and that's exactly why things with a transient delicacy — like flowers blooming at the roadside or a ray of sunshine on a warm, sunny day — that melt away in a moment are so lovely. It's that feeling of wanting that precise moment to last forever, of wanting to look at it for the rest of time, that makes me press the shutter button. I've recently become clearly aware that that's a key part of my motivation to create things."

The principal catalyst for her change of heart emerged back in 2016, around the time she was faced with the loss of her father.

"Perhaps I was looking at the world through my dying father's eyes. Scenery I'd seen before looked totally different. It was then I started focusing more on the world's splendor. I realized how wonderful it was to be alive, and that momentary radiance contained a number of glorious emotions. I decided that, while my life might be snuffed out one day, I wanted to live my life to the fullest in the here and

now. For the first time in my life, I thought it would be fine to express myself by focusing on wonderful things. I embraced my feeling that flowers and light are beautiful and photographed them. I'd also given birth to my second child, and for the first time, I allowed myself to be happy and to bask in the euphoria of being a mother."

Ninagawa also began to experience another change. Since early childhood, the artist had been searching for herself and the reasons why she was here, but recently she has come to discuss such matters from the viewpoint of "we," rather than "I."

"It took me all these years, until I began to put together a team to make a film, to discover how enriching it is to create something with other people. While the presence of a director is an absolute necessity in making a film, we always discuss everything together. Blending ideas and resonating with each other as we create something is a wonderful feeling. I hadn't realized how much fun playing in a band could be!" she said, laughing. "I've now switched from talking in terms of 'I' to 'we,' and I feel as though something new might emerge."

Soon to celebrate her 50th birthday, Mika Ninagawa calls this the halfway mark in her life. Her desire to express herself remains unstoppable. We are extremely lucky that we will be able to encounter her new forms of expression, now that she has shaken off the curse of anger being her driving force.



Photographer and film director Mika Ninagawa is one of Japan's leading contemporary artists. COURTESY: MIKA NINAGAWA

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Head Office:
Ichibancho-Daini-TG Bldg., 2-2 Ichibancho,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
The Japan Times Cube Inc.
Tel: 03-3512-0330
Email: jtc-csinfo@japantimes.co.jp
Web: <https://sustainable.japantimes.com/>

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: MINAKO SUEMATSU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: YOSHIKUNI SHIRAI
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: ARINA TSUKADA
DIRECTOR: SHINOBU YAMADA
MANAGING EDITOR: MARIANGELES DEJEAN
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DESIGN DIRECTOR: QULLO & CO.
WEB DESIGNER: ERIKO OZAKI
WEB DEVELOPER: TAKAAKI OGURA

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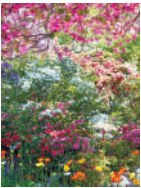


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COVER PHOTO



A photograph by multidisciplinary artist Mika Ninagawa, who works in photography and film. The flowers were shot in Tochigi Prefecture in March 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.
"FLOWERS, SHIMMERING LIGHT"
(2021) © MIKA NINAGAWA, COURTESY OF TOMIO KOYAMA GALLERY

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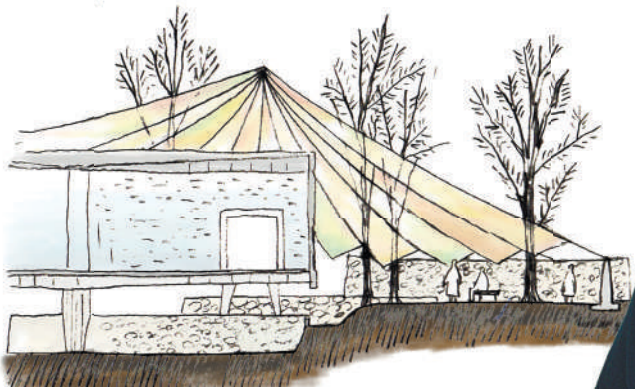
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MAKI ONISHI

Born in Aichi Prefecture in 1983. She received an undergraduate degree from the Department of Architecture and Architectural Engineering at Kyoto University in 2006, and a master's degree from the University of Tokyo Graduate School Department of Architecture in 2008. Cofounded Onishimaki + Hyakudayuki Architects in 2008. Became a professor at the Yokohama National University in 2022. Her notable works include Double Spiral House and Copal. Her awards include the JIA Newcomer Award (2018), JIA Annual Architectural Design Commendation 2019 and the AIJ Young Architect Award for Selected Architectural Designs 2019. She will serve as curator of the Japan Pavilion at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 2023.

Website: <http://www.onishihyakuda.com/>

PHOTO: YURIKA KONO



A tent by textile designer Akane Moriyama covers the entire building.

COURTESY: O+H / JAPAN FOUNDATION



The Japan Pavilion interior. The walls feature light-reflecting tiles.

COURTESY: O+H / JAPAN FOUNDATION



The Japan Pavilion at the Venice Biennale venue. The modernist architectural design by Takamasa Yoshizaka is characterized by its pilotis.

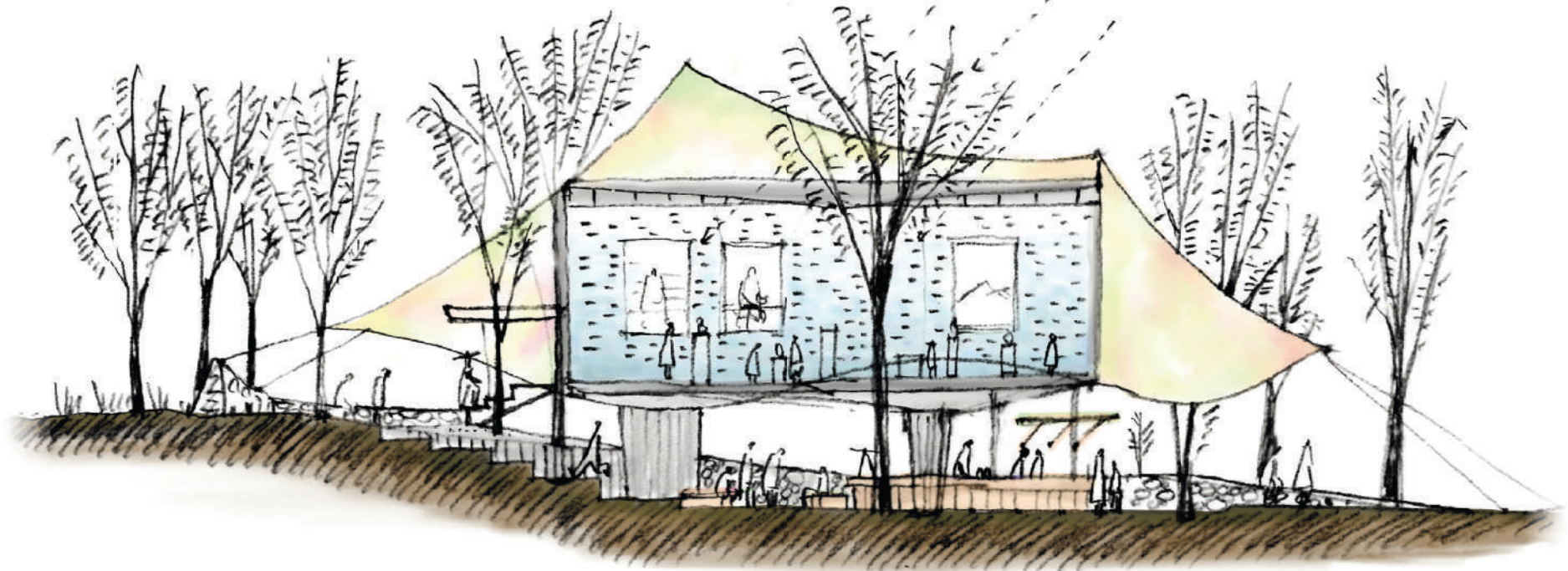
PHOTO: MINAMI NAKAWADA

Feature WOMEN'S CREATIVITY

ARCHITECT

The hottest architects' show at Venice Biennale

By FUMIKO SUZUKI



A display concept for the Japan Pavilion. Textiles will cover the building to create comfortable shade in the area. Amid the piers will be a bar-like place for people to gather. Not only the exhibits inside the building but also the building's exterior will be actively utilized to realize her philosophy of "architecture that is loved."

COURTESY: O+H / JAPAN FOUNDATION

Summary

「愛される建築」を通じて社会と建築の関係を問い直す。

来年2023年5月にイタリアで開催される第18回ヴェネチア・ビエンナーレ国際建築展。今回、日本館のキュレーターは建築家の大西麻貴だ。展示のタイトルは「愛される建築を目指して」。その着想は中学生の頃の経験にまで遡る。「サグラダ・ファミリアを見たとき、ひとりの建築家の構想が百年以上も引き継がれ、都市のアイデンティ

ティになっていることに感動し、建築がもっと人々に寄り添う方法を考えるようになりました」。

大西が考える「愛される建築」とは、生き物のように存在することの意志を感じさせる建築だ。また同時に長く残り、持続可能な社会にとって望ましい建築でもある。女性の視点からの創造という部分で最も影響を受けた

のは、小説家のヴァージニア・ウルフだという。「彼女の日記を読むと、男性中心の文学の世界でいかにして女性としての文体を生み出すかを深く考えていたことがわかります。どのように過去から学び、建築における自分だけの文体を生み出して行けるか。そう思うようになった原点はウルフにあった気がします」



日本語全文はこちら

At the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale starting next May, the Japan Pavilion will be curated by Maki Onishi, who runs a design firm she co-founded with another architect, Yuki Hyakuda, and is involved in a wide range of activities, from residential to public architecture. The title of her exhibition at the pavilion will be “Architecture, a Place of Mind.”

Born in 1983, she was in junior high school when she decided to become an architect and start to wonder what kind of architecture becomes loved. “I saw Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. That building, conceived by a single architect, has been maintained for over a hundred years and is still being built today. It has become part of the identity of its city. When I saw it, my childish heart was so moved I decided I wanted to become an architect. By contrast, when I look around here in Japan, I don’t see many buildings that seem like part of the identity of the town they’re in, or that are loved by the people there. So I began to wonder how we can make architecture that’s more accessible, more integral to people’s lives, and that will be remembered for a longer time.”

In her definition of “architecture that is loved,” Onishi suggests characteristics such as “organic,” “born and raised,” “beloved,” “unique” and “like a living thing.” The architecture that emerges from such images is something like a living organism, a building that causes one to feel its will to exist. Beloved architecture has longevity, the opposite of architecture that is consumed like fashion design. It is also architecture that is preferable for a sustainable society.

In this exhibition, Onishi intends to show the Japan Pavilion building as the epitome of beloved architecture. The pavilion is a modernist building designed by Takamasa Yoshizaka, known as a student of Le Corbusier, and completed in 1956. Many artists have used it as an exhibition venue since.

“The Japan Pavilion is a structure on pilotis [piers] that cause the entire building to float, giving an impression of there being a large creature there,” she said. “I find it an attractive example of architecture for two main reasons. The first is because the pilotis create an open outdoor space beneath the building. Another is the sequential experience from entering to exiting, allowing visitors to experience a variety of spaces as they



Japan Pavilion installations at the 2018 International Architecture Exhibition
PHOTO: MINAMI NAKAWADA

make their way through the building. I want this exhibition to take advantage of these architectural features.”

Five individuals and one firm will participate under Onishi’s curation. There will be a diverse lineup of artists in addition to the architects, including textile designers, photographers, designers and editors. All of them, including Onishi, will exchange views on what kind of architecture is beloved, engage in research and production, and tie these to the displays. This approach is also common to Onishi’s design methods.

It has been 14 years since Onishi co-founded her office with Hyakuda. In recent years there have been many male-female teams in the Japanese world of architecture, with two prime examples being SANAA (Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa) and Atelier Bow-Wow (Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima). “Construction sites are male-dominated worlds, and I think that working with a man makes it easier than working alone,” Onishi said.

“With respect to creating from a female perspective, the novelist Virginia Woolf has influenced me the most. I have always loved her novels, which I’ve read

since I was a student, and her diary shows that she was thinking deeply and in the light of history about how to create a feminine style of writing in opposition to the male-centered literary world of the time. When thinking about architecture, I want to know how we can learn from the past and create our own unique style, and I think it was Woolf who started me thinking about that.”

Having worked on many projects, she has recently had increasingly many opportunities to work on public structures. One example is Copal, a play-and-exercise facility accessible to all children, including those with disabilities or from any nation, which was completed this spring in the city of Yamagata. To realize such an inclusive facility, this project involved a series of workshops with operators and users throughout the entire process, from basic design to construction. The architecture reflects the results. She will also be in charge of designing rest facilities for Osaka’s Expo 2025, where she hopes to realize “architecture like a living creature.” Her goal of creating “architecture that is loved” will surely make the relationship between architecture and society more flexible and joyful.



A play facility for children in the city of Yamagata. The curves of the roof are reminiscent of the Zao mountains. The facility is designed to accommodate children with disabilities.
COURTESY: O+H



An illustration of rest facilities for Expo 2025 in Osaka
COURTESY: O+H

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PHOTO: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI

NATSUKO SHOJI

Born in 1989, Shoji opened Été in 2014. The cakes she creates are exquisite works of art that have gained attention around the world. Her collaborations with world-famous creators such as Takashi Murakami, Verdy and Tomo Koizumi, as well as with fashion brands, are also much talked about. Asia's 50 Best Restaurants named her Asia's Best Pastry Chef in 2020 and Asia's Best Female Chef in 2022. Shoji is also engaged in a training project for "future SDGs chefs" together with her alma mater, Komaba Gakuen High School.

Feature **WOMEN'S CREATIVITY**

CHEF

Chef makes goals real, transforms the industry

By TAEKO TERAO



Shoji's sweets collaboration project with the world-famous fashion brand Girls Don't Cry, created by graphic artist Verdy, has been much talked about as well.

© AYA KAWAUCHI

● **Summary**

有言実行でレストラン業界の慣習を変える。

「“女性”だからという理由で取材されたり、フォーカスされない時代が来るよう、革命を起こしたい」。今、世界的に評価され、注目を浴びるレストラン〈été〉オーナーシェフ、庄司夏子は語る。

複雑な家庭環境から家庭を支えるために独立するも、若くて女性であるというだけで、開業資金を借りること

も、腕のいいスタッフを雇うことも難しかった。最初はケーキ専門店として出発し、翌年にはレストランも併設。1日1組のゲストを相手に、完全紹介制でイノベティブな料理を提供し、瞬く間に予約殺到の人気店となった。

庄司は有言実行の人物。中学生の頃から憧れていた現代美術界の注目アーティスト、村上隆とのコラボレーショ

ンも狙って、勝ち取った。以来、さまざまなクリエイターとコラボレーションをし、食の可能性を広げている。

また、彼女は母校である駒場学園高等学校食物調理科で指導を行い、同校と共同でゴミから作った肥料で野菜を作るなど、食を通じた環境問題にも取り組んでいる。庄司の未来は、たくさんの可能性に溢れている。

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“I’d like to start a revolution so that in my lifetime, the day comes when simply being a woman doesn’t make someone the focus of media coverage or attention.”

Natsuko Shoji made this declaration despite being this year’s winner of the Asia’s 50 Best Restaurants award for Asia’s Best Female Chef. Shoji is the owner-chef of Été, the restaurant she opened in 2014 at the age of 24.

“My father, who suffered from alcoholism, died at a young age, and I have a younger sister with an intellectual disability, so I had to support the family. To be safe, I took out an insurance policy for ¥10 million [\$70,000], which was the same amount as my loan, and set out on my own with the determination that failure wasn’t an option.”

But the world can be a tough place. There is an especially big gender gap in

Natsuko Shoji’s masterpiece, fleurs d’été (mango), a visually stunning cake of jewel-like beauty



© AYA KAWAUCHI

Though the spotlight has been on her desserts, Shoji’s course meals, based on French cuisine and abounding in originality, have also garnered accolades in Japan and internationally for their artistic visual beauty and flavors.



© AYA KAWAUCHI





A dish that looks like a flower that has just bloomed is created by delicately arranging bits of citrus fruit and caviar one by one with tweezers.

© AYA KAWAUCHI



Served in autumn, this dish makes the most of the fragrance of matsutake, a Japanese mushroom as highly prized as the truffles and porcini of Europe.

the restaurant industry, and Shoji said that simply being young and female put many obstacles in her way. Obtaining startup funds and hiring skilled staff proved difficult. Though her real aim was to own a restaurant, she decided initially to try something she could do on her own, and started with a cake store. The pastry she created as her brand signature — a mango tart that looks like a bouquet of roses — gained a great deal of attention and led to her next step up: The following year, she opened a restaurant as an annex to the shop. Called Été, the restaurant is situated on a street corner in an upscale residential area, but its address and phone number are unlisted and it serves one group per day on an invitation-only basis. Innovative cuisine combining beauty and full, rich flavors is presented in a space that seems integrated with contemporary art. Shoji's restaurant caused a buzz, as her cakes had earlier, and soon it was inundated with reservations. She said this, too, was according to plan.

Shoji is always setting goals and mak-

ing them a reality. It is no coincidence that she has collaborated with the celebrated contemporary artist Takashi Murakami, whom she has admired since she was in junior high school. It is something she had always aimed for and ultimately achieved. After several requests to Murakami's staff for a meeting with the artist, Murakami came to Shoji's store, where she presented him with a cake featuring motifs inspired by his works. Because of its high quality, the cake would later be sold as a collaborative product without any modifications. Shoji has since worked with various creators, including fashion designers, and expanded the possibilities of cuisine.

She said her next goal was the World's 50 Best Restaurants award for Best Female Chef. "By winning the award and being in an influential position, I'd like to help eliminate the gender gap in the culinary industry in Japan and around the world — because I don't want the generation of women younger than me to go through these difficulties anymore."

She is also committed to teaching

young women who aspire to be chefs. Not only does she have an all-female staff, but she is currently mentoring students in the food preparation course at her alma mater, Komaba Gakuen High School. In addition to engaging students from the school as part-time staff in her restaurant, Shoji has been working with Komaba Gakuen to address environmen-

tal issues through food, for example by growing vegetables with fertilizer made from food waste and using the vegetables in her restaurant. She also says she wants to let the world know not only about Japanese ingredients, but about the beauty of traditional Japanese crafts in combination with cuisine. Natsuko Shoji's future abounds in possibilities.



In cooperation with the food preparation department of Komaba Gakuen High School (her alma mater), Shoji has been engaged in growing vegetables with fertilizer made from food waste.

COURTESY: ÉTÉ

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Sustainable Japan Network では、勉強会を実施しています

これまでの、ESG、SDGs を中心に行なってきました。今後は文化や芸術、食なども加え、広く Sustainable をテーマに、毎回その分野で活躍されている方、造詣が深い方に講師としてお越しいただきます。講義の後は、講師を交え活発な意見交換の時間を設けています。勉強会のご案内は弊社メーリングリストでお送りしています。

<https://sustainable.japantimes.com/newsletter#jp>



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経営共創基盤 (IGPI) 共同
経営者 マネージングディ
レクター



本田 桂子
コロンビア大学
客員教授



木村 武
日本生命保険相互会社
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Established in 1936, the Wellcome Trust is a London-based charitable foundation that aims to support medical research and other fields. The trust spends about £1 billion (\$1.13 billion) per year on funding, and in recent years has focused in particular on the issues of mental health, climate change and infectious disease. The trust also operates the Wellcome Library, which boasts a vast collection of publications related to medical history, and the Wellcome Collection, which owns and makes available to the public a wide range of health-related materials from around the world, from artworks to ethnographic documents.

COURTESY: WELLCOME TRUST

The Wellcome Trust is a London-based charitable foundation supporting medical research, established in 1936 to manage the estate of American-born pharmaceutical entrepreneur Sir Henry Wellcome. He was the first in the world to sell medicine in tablet form, thus building a vast fortune. The foundation has recently been funding research in the area of health and well-being, with a particular focus on the issue of mental health.

The Wellcome Trust is currently carrying out an international cultural program called Mindscapes. In promoting societal understanding and action regarding mental health by means of art, the program aims to develop international collaborations among museums, cultural institutions, nongovernmental organizations and so on, and explore ways in which art can provide new perspectives on these issues. Participating artists create and show works on the theme of mental health in four cities around the world: Tokyo, New York, Berlin and Bangalore. Research, workshops and public programs related to mental health are being carried out at the same time.

Artist Yuki Iiyama was selected as Mindscapes' resident artist representing Tokyo. The works on the theme of domestic violence that she created in the Mindscapes framework are being shown in the Mori Art Museum exhibition "Listen to the Sound of the Earth Turning: Our Wellbeing Since the Pandemic" until Nov. 6. It is said that currently about 1 in 4 people in the world have some sort of mental health problem. People's mental health has been viewed as a worldwide issue during the pandemic, and in this context we spoke with Iiyama about the creation of her work.

"I was motivated to create the works that are now on exhibit because of my own experience of being subjected to emotional violence — which is also

called moral harassment — by my partner. I was distressed because the relationship with my partner caused me pain and our communication wasn't productive — so I went to counseling, and that was when I realized this was domestic violence. For example, it's said that with people spending more time at home during the pandemic, the incidence of domestic violence has increased around the world. But what should the victims and the perpetrators do about this situation? In Japan the facts are reported, but that's all. The media don't tell us how to work with people who are having problems, or what kind of support is actually available, or the problems with current laws. So in this work, along with interviews of perpetrators, victims and supporters, I made handouts providing information on domestic violence support in Tokyo and explaining the structures in which domestic violence occurs."

One of Iiyama's works exhibited at the Mori Art Museum, "Eating the Patriarchy" (2022), is a powerful video that, once seen, cannot be forgotten. Iiyama herself appears in the film, baking bread that looks like a man and, at the end, eating the bread. She said she cut her hair in a buzz cut prior to production, in order to express the idea of "injury" and to avoid sexual overtones. At times Iiyama's sobs and other heartrending vocalizations are included in the video as well.

"I had an advance meeting with the museum people to talk about preparations to make in case seeing my works made any visitors feel ill in the exhibition space. With the cooperation of Aware, a citizens' action group that aims to achieve a gender-equal society by eradicating domestic violence, the people involved held a study meeting about domestic violence and considered what sort of guidance exhibition staff should provide. Specifically, since the Mori Art Museum has a break room, it was decid-

ed that if anyone felt unwell, staff members would just speak to them, without physically touching them, and guide them to the room. We also set up a system where visitors can leave written comments about their own experiences, feelings and so on, and the comments remain posted at all times during the exhibition period. What's really interesting is that simulated debates among visitors are taking place through this system."

It isn't easy to convey individuals' experience and emotional pain to other people. But showing it in public spaces as works of art will enable many people to sympathize with that pain, and this should make it possible for people to come together in solidarity. The works of Yuki Iiyama have that potential. We live in a time when works by popular artists sell for high prices at auctions and the art market is increasingly overheated, but it is better to focus on the efforts of an artist whose approach is somewhat different.



"Shapes of Shadows: The Power and Control That Occurs Between Intimate Partnerships" (2022)

COURTESY: WELLCOME TRUST, LONDON; WAITINGROOM, TOKYO
INSTALLATION VIEW: "LISTEN TO THE SOUND OF THE EARTH TURNING: OUR WELLBEING SINCE THE PANDEMIC," MORI ART MUSEUM, TOKYO, 2022

PHOTO: KORODA TAKERU
PHOTO COURTESY: MORI ART MUSEUM, TOKYO

Feature WOMEN'S CREATIVITY

ARTIST

Wellcome picks artist Iiyama for Mindscapes

By TOSHICHIKA IZUMI (SPECIAL THANKS TO MARI SAITO)

YUKI IIYAMA

Born in Kanagawa Prefecture in 1988. In 2011, Iiyama graduated with a major in painting from the Department of Fine Arts of Joshibi University of Art and Design. In 2013, she completed a master's degree in oil painting from Tokyo University of the Arts. Her representative works include "Moomin Family Goes on a Picnic to See Kannon" (2014), inspired by the audio and visual hallucinations of Iiyama's younger sister, who has an emotional disability. Taking clues from archive materials from the past and interviews with various people, Iiyama creates videos and installations drawing on her interest in societal and individual influences and relationships. The special exhibition "Yuki Iiyama: We Walk and Talk to Search Your True Home" is being held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Human Rights Plaza in Tokyo's Minato Ward until Nov. 30.



"Eating the Patriarchy" (2022)

COURTESY: WELLCOME TRUST, LONDON; WAITINGROOM, TOKYO
PHOTO: KANAGAWA SHINGO



PHOTO: KOUSUKE HASHIZUME

Summary

世界的な医療研究財団が
選んだ飯山由貴とは誰か？

〈ウェルカム・トラスト〉は、ロンドンが本拠地の医学への研究支援を行う公益信託団体。1936年設立で、近年では健康やウェルビーイングに関する研究を支援し、特にメンタルヘルスの課題に取り組んでいる。その財団の国際文化プログラムが「マインドスケープス」。芸術がこの問題に新しい視点を提供できるかを探る試みである。

その「マインドスケープス」の東京代表として選ばれた作品をつくったのがアーティストの飯山由貴だ。彼女はドメスティックバイオレンスに関する作品を森美術館で展示している（『地球がまわる音を聴く：パンデミック以降のウェルビーイング』～2022年11月6日まで）。今や世界で4人にひとりが何らかのメンタルヘルス上の問題を抱

えていると言われるなか飯山由貴の作品が胸に迫る。

人間ひとりひとりの、心の痛みやその経験を他人に伝えることは容易ではない。でもアート作品として展示・公開することで、多くの人がその痛みに関心したり、それをきっかけに連帯したりすることができるだろう。飯山由貴の作品はそんな可能性を秘めている。



日本語全文はこちらから



thejapantimes

Destination Restaurants 2022

AUTHENTIC JAPAN SELECTION

Cooking shaped by Niigata mountains, history

By TAEKO TERAOKA



Nakajima *kinchaku* eggplant topped with bell peppers and leek flowers picked by Kuwakino. Guests may order vegan meals featuring dishes like this one.

PHOTOS: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI

● KEIKO KUWAKINO

Born in 1980 in Saitama Prefecture, Kuwakino gained an interest in Ayurveda while working as an esthetician and traveled to Australia to study it. She then spent seven years living in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Europe, learning in depth about topics including yoga and vegan diets before returning to Japan. After working at a vegan restaurant in Tokyo, she came to Satoyama Jujo in 2014. In 2018 she became the restaurant's head chef.



Niigata (Japanese)

SATOYAMA JUJO

1209-6 Osawa,
Minamiuonuma-shi, Niigata Prefecture
Tel: 0570-001-810
<https://www.satoyama-jujo.com>

The Osawa district of Minamiuonuma in Niigata Prefecture has long been known for its outstanding rice. The area is to rice farming what the Burgundy estate Domaine de la Romanee-Conti is to wine. The hot spring resort Satoyama Jujo overlooks Osawa's rice paddies. Occupying a 150-year-old dwelling made entirely of lacquered zelkova wood, the reception hall sits beside the resort's own paddies, and beginning each October, guests are served the new crop of local rice, including some planted and harvested by resort staff.

"Our main dish is white rice steamed in clay pots," chef Keiko Kuwakino said proudly. The water used to wash and cook the rice is Osawa spring water. It is a dish that distills the bounty of this area, where people live in harmony with the mountain forests surrounding them. At dinner, guests are served a taste of the rice the moment it is removed from the heat, still al dente. It is then allowed to sit with the lid on, softening, developing sweetness and forming a fragrant crust on the bottom. In this way the flavor and texture of the rice change over the course of the meal.

In between, heritage vegetables and other local ingredients shine. At one meal, fried *kajika* river frogs were served as an appetizer, skewered on refreshingly fragrant spicebush branches picked in the woods by Kuwakino. It is just one example of the flavors contributed by berries, flowers, nuts and herbs the chef picks in the woods and farm fields. The charcoal-grilled *ayu* (sweetfish) was served alongside house-made soba noodles with a sauce of pounded ayu bones and liver reminiscent of Italian pasta. The

"Nakajima *kinchaku* eggplant with bell pepper and leek flowers" featured a firm-fleshed traditional eggplant variety that holds its shape when cooked, served in a savory sesame-vegetable broth and garnished with chopped peppers and leek flowers. This was followed by *nodoguro* (blackthroat seaperch) from Sado Island grilled over charcoal, pork steaks from a pig breed called *kiramugi ton*, clay-pot steamed rice, and dessert. Not once did the meal use the broth of *konbu* and bonito flakes so common in contemporary Japanese cooking. Instead, the dishes relied on the richly varied flavors that can be extracted from local vegetables and fish. This, too, is the bounty of the Minamiuonuma area.

Since she began working at Satoyama Jujo eight years ago, Kuwakino said, she has learned much from her mentor, whose regular job is driving a taxi. She has learned when and where to harvest wild mountain vegetables, how to prepare them, and how to observe them from the time they sprout in spring until they wither back into the earth. She has learned to distinguish the male and female varieties of certain plants, and knows it is important to leave the males unpicked for the sake of future harvests. She has learned about wild grapes, chestnuts and other fruits and nuts that can be preserved by drying, salting, submerging in alcohol or smoking. This is wisdom that has been passed down for generations in a region traditionally isolated by deep winter snows. There are hamlets nearby whose entire population starved to death in the winter during the Edo Period. This restaurant poses anew the question of what it means to eat, and what delicious food really is.

● Summary

米どころ南魚沼の里山と歴史、厳しい冬に育まれた料理。

古民家を利用した温泉旅館「里山十帖」は日本一の米どころ、新潟県南魚沼にある。「うちのメインディッシュは土鍋で炊いた白飯です」とシェフ、桑木野恵子は胸を張る。ディナーでは火を止めた瞬間から蒸らした状態、おこげと時間の経過で味も食感も変わる白飯を提供する。

その前後を伝統野菜を中心に、地元で穫れる食材が彩る。シェフ自ら採る木の実や花、ハーブなどが風味を添える。炭火焼の鮎を手打ちそばと合わせた、イタリアンのパスタのような一品。中島巾着茄子を主役に、野菜による植物性の旨味だけで表現

した椀物。佐渡産ノドグロの炭火焼きなどが出て、土鍋ごはん、デザートとなる。そのなかで鰯と昆布の出汁は一切、使われない。地元でとれる野菜や魚からバラエティ豊かな旨味を抽出できるからだ。

桑木野は地元の「師匠」に山菜や木の実の生感、保存法などを教わった。収穫物は乾物、塩漬けなどにして貯蔵し料理に生かす。それはかつて、冬に全村餓死もあった土地に伝わる知恵だ。おいしさとは、食べるとは。考えさせられる一軒である。



日本語全文はこちら

Destination Restaurant 2022 PARTNERS

TASAKI



OPEN HOUSE



guntû

CHAMPAGNE
LA GRANDE DAME
Veuve Clicquot

ANA

JR
JR-EAST GROUP

ROYAL PARK HOTELS

MAFF
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

JNTO

POCKET CONCIERGE
ALWAYS THERE



Sponsored by ANA

DESTINATION

Echigo-Tsumari
Art Field

Niigata



There are some locations that any visit to Niigata Prefecture should include. Among these are the region's art facilities, such as the Museum on Echigo-Tsumari (MonET) in Tokamachi (right) and the Ubusana House (right), a traditional Japanese thatched-roof house that both hosts pottery exhibitions and al-

lows overnight stays. The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2022 is currently being held in Niigata Prefecture, mainly in the Tokamachi area, and will continue until Nov. 13. The area is surrounded by mountains and rich in nature. There is little public transportation, so we recommend touring the area by car.



PHOTO: KIOKU KEIZO



PHOTO: KAWASE KAZUE

6-1 Honcho Tokamachi-shi, Niigata Prefecture Tel: 025-761-7766
Open hours: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Admission: ¥1,200 or ¥1,500 (special exhibition)
<https://niigata-kankou.or.jp/spot/42279>



VOL. 3: NEC Corp.

NEC

Mission: Sustainability

By OSAMU INOUE / Renew

NEC's strong points

- 1 Selected as a component of all of ESG indexes for Japanese stocks adopted by the Government Pension Investment Fund, including the FTSE Blossom Japan Index
- 2 Contributes to solving sustainability and social issues using technologies from its main business, including biometric authentication and artificial intelligence
- 3 Puts effort into initiatives that can contribute to society, including “AI and human rights” and “increasing visibility of CO2”
- 4 Its chief financial officer concurrently serves as executive officer in charge of sustainable management and works to improve nonfinancial value

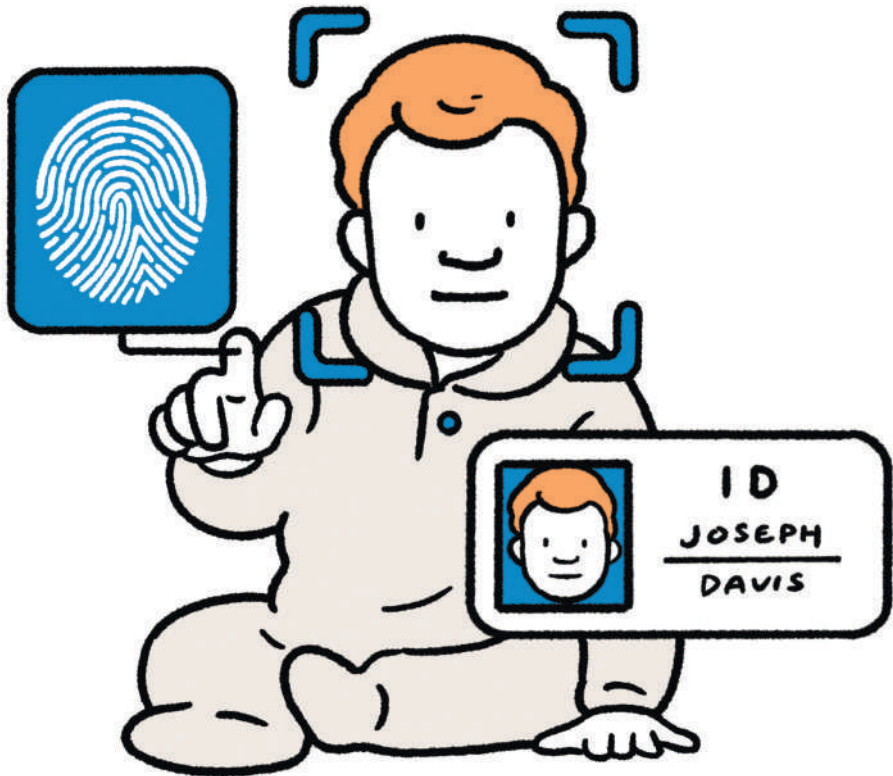


ILLUSTRATION: SHO FUJITA

NEC uses technology to contribute to sustainability

NEC Corp., one of Japan’s leading IT vendors, is in the process of transforming itself from an information and communications technology company into a “company that contributes to achieving sustainability using information and communication technology.” Many companies have adopted a “realize a sustainable society” slogan or sustainability-oriented business model, but the degrees of their commitments vary. Not a small number of these companies are doing so in form only, adopting such slogans as a marketing play or to sound convincing to investors. But objective evaluation proves NEC is not among them. There is a factual basis for calling the company a “leader that drives the world’s sustainability with technology.”

Inclusion in ESG indexes
NEC is a component company of many of the world’s key ESG stock indexes. One of them is the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices World Index, which selects companies that excel in sustainability efforts among the world’s top 3,500 companies in terms of market capitalization. Selection for this index is a testament on a global level to a sustainability-oriented company. In 2021, it select-

ed 322 companies globally, including 35 from Japan. NEC was one of them, and was selected for the second straight year. Japan’s Government Pension Investment Fund, one of the world’s biggest pension funds, uses eight environmental, social and governance (ESG) indexes in its investment strategy. Of these, five, including the FTSE Blossom Japan Index and the MSCI Japan Empowering Women (WIN) Select Index, target Japanese stocks. NEC is included in all five. CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, is an international non-profit organization that evaluates climate change measures taken by companies. NEC was selected among highly rated “A List” companies in the “climate change” and “water security” sections for three consecutive years. It was also listed as a “supplier engagement leader” for two consecutive years. In the area of carbon neutrality, NEC pledged in fiscal 2021 to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide from not just the company but also its entire supply chains — known as Scope 3 — to net-zero by 2050. Many listed Japanese companies have pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, but few of them have clearly stated they aim to include Scope 3 in their targets for carbon neutrality. The essence of NEC’s transformation, however, is not clearly revealed by these evaluations.

Biometric authentication
“NEC is currently in the middle of the ‘third founding period.’ All of our operations exist for CSV [creating shared value],” NEC Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Osamu Fujikawa said. He also serves as officer in charge of sustainable management (see the interview article in the box). For NEC, working to improve efficiency and convenience for customer

companies and organizations by integrating computers and communications was what characterized its second founding phase. Working to achieve sustainability and resolve issues for society using technology is what characterizes its third founding period. In NEC’s definition, sustainable management means that its core business contributes to improving sustainability and resolving social issues, instead of paying attention to the environment only on the surface. Illustrative of this are contributions NEC made using its biometric authentication technology, which boasts one of the highest standards of precision in the world. NEC provided biometric authentication technology combining face, iris and fingerprint recognition for Aadhaar, a program introduced in 2009 by the Indian government to identify its people. The company contributed to simplifying the registration process — deemed the most technically difficult part — plus various application processes under the program, for which 1.3 billion people have registered. “At the time, a key problem for the government was that its attempt at distributing money to poor people was undermined by malicious intermediaries who purportedly applied for the service on their behalf just to exploit them, resulting in the money not reaching the intended targets. The problem was resolved using our biometric authentication technology,” Fujikawa said. “Other developing countries, not just India, have similar problems,” he added. “A technology that can address these social issues has significant value.” Biometric authentication technology is often seen as a way to improve efficiency. Less well known is that it also can save infants and people in trouble. In a 2019 test project that NEC

conducted in Kenya, it successfully reduced the error rate of fingerprint authentication for infants on the day of their birth, including babies just 2 hours old, to 0.3%. In the same year, NEC signed a memorandum of understanding on the use of biometrics to improve immunization coverage in developing countries with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance — a body established in 2000 at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum to promote vaccination — and another entity. The project aims to develop fingerprint authentication technology that works for children ages 1 to 5. Biometric authentication technologies like this use artificial intelligence technology. NEC has now also begun to apply AI technology to entirely different areas in order to contribute to achieving the sustainability of humanity.

AI drug development
“We launched an AI drug development business in 2019. We took it seriously enough to amend the articles of incorporation at a general shareholders meeting,” said Yuria Hiroi, director of NEC’s Sustainability Promotion Division. “That made me realize that NEC has come so far in re-inventing itself. We are more committed to using our technology for society.” NEC is currently working with a French biotechnology company on a project to develop a therapy using individualized neoantigen vaccines — vaccines with tumor-specific antigens. It uses AI analysis to enable the administration of a vaccine that is optimized for the genetic makeup of each patient and triggers the patient’s immune response to fight cancer. In 2020, the company began conducting clinical tests of individualized vaccines targeting ovarian and head and neck cancer. It has expanded the scope of the AI technology’s

The Sustainability Promotion Division's Director Yuria Hiroi (right) and senior professional Koichi Inagaki



application to the development of a novel coronavirus vaccine.

Furthermore, NEC announced this past June a joint project with Kagome Co., a major Japanese food company, as part of its efforts on AI farming. It and Kagome set up a joint venture in Portugal to provide farming support for tomatoes used to make ketchup. The plan is to have the AI learn from successful examples of experienced farmers, then provide a service using digital technology to monitor plant growth and soil conditions and give instructions on the optimum amounts of water and fertilizer.

“Farming is said to represent 75% of water consumption, so [the service] can have a significant impact on the protection of the Earth’s water resources. It can also help prevent soil contamination resulting from using excessive amounts of fertilizers,” Fujikawa said. “Furthermore, it can be useful for averting a food crisis, as it can increase crop yields. I think AI technology has the potential to contribute to very broad areas of efforts to realize sustainability.”

While hopeful on AI’s potential, Fujikawa also had this to say, as if to remind himself: “Cutting-edge technologies, including AI, could lead to big problems if you use them in the wrong way. In particular, we are a leader in facial recognition and image recognition, which means we must also be a leader in the protection of human rights and privacy.”

Respecting human rights

In 2019, NEC established the “NEC Group AI and Human Rights Principles,” which place top priority on respecting human rights in business activities, and has since been working to develop systems and rules that “cannot be used with malicious intent” and also cover nonprofit activities.

“About 70% to 80% of my work is for strengthening governance structures for protecting human rights,” said Hiroi of the Sustainability Promotion Division.

“Strict regulations are being introduced in Europe and the United States, and we are leading such activities by getting deeply involved in them and expressing our views,” she continued. “We have communicated comments to Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. We believe it’s our responsibility as a leading vendor in the industry to help create a world where technologies unlikely to cause human rights violations are chosen.”

There are concerns that facial-recognition and AI technologies could be used for purposes that undermine human rights, including unmanned

deadly weapons targeting individuals and identifying “easy prey” for scams at casinos. Such applications could be lucrative for the makers. But NEC has chosen to place top priority on respecting human rights and has been toiling for the creation of a world where people are protected from malicious actors.

The company attaches importance to social contributions, rather than short-term gains, which probably reflects the “NEC Way,” a common set of values forming the basis for how the group conducts itself. This attitude is seen in many aspects of the company.

In October 2021, the Green x Digital Consortium was launched, with its administrative office set up within the Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association. JEITA, led by IT and electronics giants, including Panasonic Corp., Sony Corp. and Fujitsu Ltd., is one of Japan’s largest industry groups.

The consortium aims, first, to develop a platform that enhances CO2 visibility across supply chains and, second, to establish new methods of purchasing renewable energy. NEC leads a working group on the first aim, working with a total of 74 companies (as of April) from industries including transportation, finance, automotive and construction.

Leading this role at NEC is Koichi Inagaki, a senior professional in the company’s Sustainability Promotion Division.

“There are many competing tools for increasing visibility of CO2, and criteria are vague. Unless we unify them, we won’t be able to see the true picture or devise measures,” he said.

“In addition, when it comes to reducing CO2 emissions, we won’t be able to expect a significant impact unless everybody across all industries and all supply chains is committed.”

As Inagaki says, most CO2 emissions from businesses are discharged from Scope 3 activities within supply chains, such as the purchase and use of products, rather than production activity per se. In fact, Scope 3 represents 95% of NEC’s total emissions.

The problem is, different companies and industries have different ways of calculating the enormous amounts of Scope 3 emissions, so there are no unified criteria. That is why the initiative led by NEC involves providing tools to calculate emissions in any industry, establishing standards and creating a platform under which CO2 emissions are calculated and shared.

Naturally, the platform will belong to no one in particular and be a quasi-public one that contributes to re-



At the conclusion of the agreement with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

ducing CO2 emissions for Japan as a whole. It will benefit not just NEC but every company under equal conditions. NEC’s taking the initiative in the endeavor is a testament to its commitment to prioritizing the nonfinancial value of its business.

Financial and nonfinancial

“Carrying out initiatives for financial affairs, which are an indicator of outcomes, and initiatives for nonfinancial affairs, which create future value, in an integrated manner will help maintain sustainable growth and lead to improvement in the ability to respond to changes,” Fujikawa said in front of many media reporters gathered for a briefing on ESG-related activities in December 2021.

NEC is not trying to contribute to sustainability or resolving social issues at the cost of its growth or profits. On the contrary, the company is convinced that the nonfinancial value of operations that contribute significantly to society will also drive its enterprise value and growth.

That is why NEC decided to adopt a structure in which the chief financial officer concurrently serves as officer in charge of sustainable management.

“My biggest mission is to increase [NEC’s] enterprise value,” Fujikawa said. “In my view, financial and nonfinancial affairs are ultimately two sides of the same coin that leads to improving enterprise value. My responsibilities as CFO naturally include the nonfinancial domain, not just the existing responsibility for financial affairs.”

At first glance, it appears unusual for a CFO, who is responsible for financial affairs, to also serve as the officer tasked to promote sustainable management and ESG principles, which are the two biggest factors driving nonfinancial value. However, the decision is very reasonable when the goal is to maximize enterprise value. In the near future, we may find ourselves in a world where a CFO in charge of ESG affairs is nothing unusual.



CropScope, an AI farming support tool jointly developed by NEC and Kagome



Summary

技術でサステナビリティに貢献 NECの変革

今、国内有数のITベンダーであるNECは、「ICT」の会社から「ICTを活かしサステナビリティに貢献する会社」へと大転換しようとしている。

「持続可能な社会の実現」や、それを目標とした「Purpose経営」を標榜する企業は多いが、その濃淡や、本気度は千差万別。中には、「口だけ」でマーケティング

グ目的やIR対策でそう銘打つ企業も少なくない。

だが、NECには「そうではない」と言える客観的な評価がある。「技術で世界のサステナビリティをけん引するリーダー」と言えるファクトもある。

象徴するのが、世界トップクラスの精度を誇る「生体認証」技術を使った貢献だろう。

生体認証技術というと、効率化だけに目が行きがちだが、困った人々や小さな命を救う技術でもあることは、あまり知られていない。

生体認証技術には、AI技術も活用されているが、そのAI技術を全く違う分野に応用し、人類のサステナビリティに貢献する挑戦が始まっている。



日本語全文はこちらから



Sofa WEEKEND design : ARFLEX JAPAN R&D
Living table ELEMENTO design : Kensaku Oshiro

new model 2022
Weekend



Location : **CASA MIA KAWAGUCHI-KO**
ARFLEX JAPAN LTD. <https://www.arflex.co.jp/en/>
customer@arflex.co.jp

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