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Which Is Why We Invent – Spectrosynthesis V

February 6 – May 16, 2027

The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (MOT) and Sunpride Foundation announce participating artists and further exhibition highlights for *Which Is Why We Invent – Spectrosynthesis V*, on view at MOT from February 6 to May 16, 2027. The exhibition is co-curated by Che Kyongfa, Curator at MOT, and X Zhu-Nowell, Executive Director and Chief Curator of Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai.

The fifth edition of Sunpride Foundation's *Spectrosynthesis* series takes Japan's social and cultural context as a point of departure, bringing artists across generations and geographies into dialogue. Drawing on the collections of Sunpride Foundation and MOT, alongside commissions, loans, and archival materials, it marks the first time the series has engaged with a co-presenting institution's own collection.

The exhibition takes its title from Dumb Type's performance *S/N* (1994), created amid the AIDS crisis. The work questioned the systems through which identity, gender, sexuality, and illness are classified, while seeking other possibilities for communication and collective life. Building on these concerns, *Which Is Why We Invent* examines how artists respond to the tension between social norms and the lives those norms seek to regulate. Across painting, moving image, photography, sculpture, installation, and performance, the works challenge established representations of bodies and desire, bring overlooked histories, especially in the Japanese context, into view, and examine how gender and sexuality are shaped through relations of nationhood, race, and class.

Here, “invention” names the ongoing work of giving form to ways of being and relating that existing frameworks cannot adequately accommodate. Rather than proposing an escape from social constraints, the exhibition considers how artistic practices work through, contest, and transform them. Performance and activism, as well as independent publishing and informal channels of communication, emerge as means of sharing knowledge, articulating experience, and sustaining collective life.

Patrick Sun, Founder and Executive Director of Sunpride Foundation, comments:
“It is with great excitement that we bring *Spectrosynthesis* to Japan, home to some of Asia’s most enduring and influential histories of queer culture. I am deeply grateful to the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo for approaching this partnership with extraordinary openness and vision,

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All Programs are subject to change.

and for inviting works from its own collection to be reinterpreted through a queer lens. My heartfelt appreciation goes to curators Che Kyongfa and X Zhu-Nowell, whose dedicated research imbues the exhibition with a profound sense of change and fluidity."

Reflecting on the exhibition's approach and the significance of presenting *Spectrosynthesis V* in Japan, co-curators Che Kyongfa and X Zhu-Nowell comment:
"For the fifth edition of *Spectrosynthesis*, the Japanese context is central to our inquiry. Working through archives has allowed us to trace forms of kinship that developed across borders in the 1990s through artistic practice, activism, and independent media. Bringing these histories into dialogue with the present reminds us that the social and political conditions of LGBTQ lives are continually changing: progress is uneven, gains can be reversed, and these shifts are experienced differently across places and communities.
As curators, we see the importance of Sunpride's growing collection in its capacity to sustain relationships with LGBTQ artists and communities over time. Presenting it in Japan offers an opportunity to deepen those relationships through encounters with the histories, practices, and concerns emerging here. Our approach follows particular lives and relationships, tracing connections across Asia while remaining attentive to differences that a single overarching narrative might obscure."

Exhibition Highlights

New commissions

Ming Wong revisits his work *Life and Death in Venice* (2010) in the Sunpride Foundation collection, exploring how the image of Björn Andrésen, who starred in Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971), influenced the representation of homoerotic desire in Japanese girls' manga in the 1970s. **Takata Fuyuhiko** develops a video installation exploring the complex dynamics between subjectivity and self-image in collaboration with dancers and performers. **Akira the Hustler** will present a new flag held by the existing work, *Cloud Man*, alongside a new sculpture modeled after a human femur. Drawing on ACT UP's AIDS activism and transphobic remarks he has encountered, he incorporates his own words into the works through embroidery and engraving, questioning the conditions surrounding HIV/AIDS and sexual minorities today. **Sung Hwan Kim**, whose works explore how certain experiences come to be left out of dominant historical narratives, as well as questions of the body and gender in relation to migration and borders, will present existing works and a new concert in collaboration with composer David Michael DiGregorio (dogr). **Cole Lu** will develop a site-specific work that addresses queer subjectivity and the erasure of histories and memories of gender minorities, extending his broader practice of rewriting myths and inherited narratives—a practice also reflected in an earlier work in the Sunpride Foundation collection. **Puppies Puppies (Jade Guanaro Kuriki-Olivo)** will create a new sculptural work that brings together the die-in as a form of political resistance and 3D-printed representations of the artist's own body.

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Shu Lea Cheang's *LOVER LOVE*

Another major highlight will be **Shu Lea Cheang's** *LOVER LOVE* (2026), a large-scale, four-channel moving-image installation first presented at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art in New York, where it premiered in April 2026. Developed in collaboration with eight trans and gender-nonconforming performers of different generations, the work brings together their experiences, narratives, and imaginings of trans life.

Moving between documentary and speculative fiction, physical and virtual spaces, *LOVER LOVE* explores questions of survival, agency, and intimacy. As visitors move the projection screens, the interplay of images and sound shifts, opening up different relationships between bodies, images, and space.

Highlights from the Sunpride Foundation Collection

Works from Sunpride Foundation's collection will introduce three artists to audiences in Japan for the first time: **Cole Lu, Sin Wai Kin, and Xiyadie**.

In addition to presenting a new commission, **Cole Lu**, known for his allegorical works drawing on myth, literary narratives, historical imagery, and archival references, presents a pyrographic work that marks the beginning of his sustained use of fire as a drawing method, while reworking Pinocchio as one inherited narrative within a broader practice of myth-making. Through moving-image, print, and performance incorporating drag, **Sin Wai Kin** challenges binary perspectives, exploring how our ways of seeing, acting, and being are shaped. Drawing on the traditional Chinese art of paper-cutting, **Xiyadie** creates vivid images rooted in his personal experiences, exploring the tensions between social expectations surrounding heterosexual marriage and family life and same-sex desire, as well as the longing for love and intimacy.

The exhibition also presents works by artists who have rarely been shown in Japan. A pioneer of new media art in Hong Kong, **Ellen Pau** explores questions of gender and identity in relation to tradition and modernity through a moving-image work featuring a female Cantonese opera duo. **Jakkai Siributr** presents quilts made by deconstructing and reassembling garments donated by friends. Referencing the AIDS Memorial Quilt and visual expressions associated with LGBTQ+ rights movements, these works bring personal experiences and memories into dialogue with histories of resistance to discrimination and collective solidarity.

Gender, Sexuality, and Performance: Perspectives from 1990s Japan

The exhibition will present documentation of the performance *S/N* (1994) by **Dumb Type**, alongside sketches and archival materials illuminating its development. **Shimada Yoshiko & BuBu de la Madeleine's** *Made in Occupied Japan* (1998) examines the construction of Japanese femininity and sexuality through the intertwined histories of war, occupation, and relations with the United States. The exhibition will also feature *Self-Portrait* (1996–97) and *Me Being Me* (1998–99) by **Ito Tari**, including video documentation, sketches, and texts. Through these performances, Ito asserted her

lesbian identity, using her own body as a site for contesting social norms and negotiating agency.

Archives and Public Programs

Beyond artworks, the exhibition also presents archival materials from radio programs, independently produced magazines (*minikomi*), and zines—media that have fostered informal connections and forms of collectivity. These materials reveal how alternative channels for sharing information and experiences have emerged outside established institutions and mainstream media. Archival materials from the AIDS Poster Project, developed by members of Dumb Type in collaboration with other artists and activists around the time of *S/N*, will also be presented in the museum foyer. Public programs including performances, workshops, talks, and screenings will take place throughout the exhibition period. Further details will be announced in due course.

Participating Artists **Artists listed alphabetically by their names as written.*

Akira the Hustler, Bhenji Ra, Bhupen Khakhar, Cole Lu, Dumb Type, Ellen Pau, Endo Mai × Momose Aya, Evelyn Taocheng Wang, Ito Tari, Jakkai Siributr, Jean Barth, Ming Wong, Mori Eiki, Otsuka Takashi, Puppies Puppies (Jade Guanaro Kuriki-Olivo), Shimada Yoshiko & BuBu de la Madeleine, Shu Lea Cheang, Sin Wai Kin, siren eun young jung × KIRARA, Sung Hwan Kim, Takata Fuyuhiko, Trevor Yeung, Wu Tsang, Xiyadie, and others.

General Information

Exhibition Title	Which Is Why We Invent – Spectrosynthesis V
Exhibition Period	February 6 – May 16, 2027
Opening Hours	10 AM – 6 PM (Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing)
Closed	Mondays (except March 22 and May 3), March 23, May 6
Venue	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Exhibition Gallery 1F
Admission	Adults: 1,700 yen 65 and over: 1,190 yen University & College Students: 1,090 yen High School & Junior High School Students: 680 yen Elementary School Students & Younger: Free
Webpage	https://www.mot-art-museum.jp/en/exhibitions/SUNPRIDE/
Inquiries	+81-3-5245-4111 (main line)
Co-organized by	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo operated by Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture and Sunpride Foundation
Curated by	Che Kyongfa (Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo) and X Zhu-Nowell (Executive Director and Chief Curator, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai)

Also on View

February 6 – May 16, 2027	Hans Haacke: Information Flow
February 20 – May 30, 2027	MOT Annual 2027: Embodying
	MOT Collection

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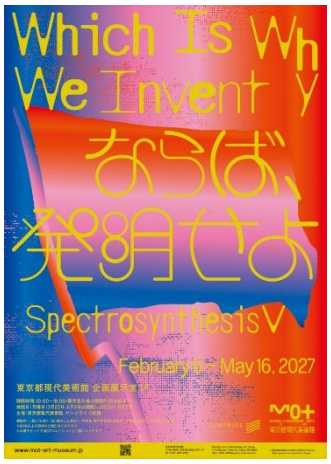
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01
Exhibition Main Visual
Design: Ota Takumi



02
Ming Wong
Life and Death in Venice, 2010
Collection of Sunpride Foundation
Image courtesy of the artist and Sunpride Foundation



03
Takata Fuyuhiko
Cut Suits, 2023
Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
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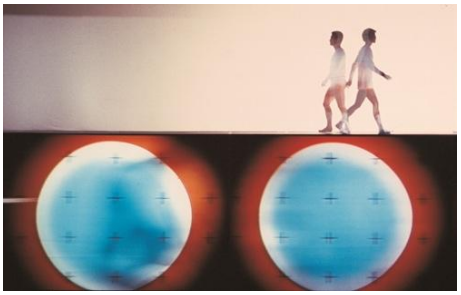
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04
Shu Lea Cheang
LOVER LOVE, 2026
Collection of the artist



05
Sin Wai Kin
Tell me everything you saw, and what you think it means, 2018
Collection of Sunpride Foundation
Image courtesy of the artist, Blindspot Gallery and Sunpride Foundation



06
Dumb Type
S/N, 1994
Collection of the artists
Photo by Takatani Yoko



07
Shimada Yoshiko + BuBu de la Madeleine
Made in Occupied Japan, 1998
Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
©Yoshiko Shimada and BuBu de la Madelaine

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