

December 5, 2026

Press Release

5th Anniversary Exhibition

SUGITO Hiroshi: flyleaf and liner

Date: December 5 (Fri.), 2025 – May 17 (Sun.), 2026

Venue: Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art

Collaborator: HATTORI Kazunari

Guest Artist: Gokula STOFFEL



弘前れんが倉庫美術館

HIROSAKI
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY
ART

One of the leading painters in Japan today, Sugito Hiroshi (b. 1970) has been presenting work both at home and internationally since the 1990s. His paintings depict familiar objects and natural elements of the world in which we live—little houses and boats, fruit, trees, raindrops—in delicate yet rhythmical compositions notable also for their lines and geometric shapes, all rendered in vibrant hues.

In this exhibition Sugito turns his attention to blank spaces, to the places we do not notice immediately, such as the paper and lengths of wood stuck on the back of a painting lining or edging the canvas. Lurking in all sorts of locations, these “blanks” include the flyleaf that appears after the cover of a book, and the linings of garments. Sugito begins work by pausing in front of these and turning his mind to them.

This exhibition consists of works by Sugito dating from the 1990s up to the present, focusing primarily on painting and assembled in collaboration with graphic designer Hattori Kazunari. Displaying Sugito’s paintings and Hattori’s photographs inside and outside spaces covered in Sugito-inspired wallpaper designed by Hattori embodies the exhibition theme of “flyleaf and liner” to stunning effect.



Exhibition poster (designed by HATTORI Kazunari)

Press Contact Information

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Exhibition Highlights

1. Collaboration with Hattori Kazunari

Collaborating on this exhibition is Hattori Kazunari, a graphic designer whose versatile career has encompassed everything from graphics for magazines and advertising, to artwork for musicians, and visual identity design for the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, including the HIROSAKI-MoCA logo. Of this, Sugito has said it was Hattori's stint in art direction for fashion magazine *Ryuko Tsushin* (2002–04) that made the greatest impression on him. Compiled by an array of creators, *Ryuko Tsushin* was crammed with creative inspiration from far beyond the confines of fashion, and Sugito says that Hattori's bold, freewheeling approach to composition, that included photos taken by himself, and collages, offered ideas for his own art production.

Hattori's involvement with *Ryuko Tsushin* in the early 2000s also coincided with the series of three Nara Yoshitomo exhibitions* held at the Brick Warehouse (Yoshii Shuzo Brick Warehouse) prior to the building's rebirth as an art museum. Sugito traveled to Hirosaki on several occasions during this period to participate in the 2006 exhibition *YOSHITOMO NARA + graf A to Z*, and for him, recollections of Hirosaki overlap with those of *Ryuko Tsushin* when Hattori was artistic director.

This collaboration between the pair, at Sugito's invitation, will also resound with memories of the spaces of the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, and of the local area.

**I DON'T MIND, IF YOU FORGET ME*. in 2002, *From the Depth of My Drawer* in 2005, and *YOSHITOMO NARA + graf A to Z* in 2006. The exhibitions were assembled and run by volunteers, chiefly local residents, and attracted a total of over 150,000 visitors from the prefecture and beyond. The success of these three shows was a major factor in the establishment of the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art.



SUGITO Hiroshi, *color tree 2*, 1994/2024
Collection of the Artist
©Hiroshi Sugito, Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery
Photo by Kenji Takahashi



SUGITO Hiroshi, *untitled*, 2017
Collection of the Artist
©Hiroshi Sugito, Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery
Photo by Kenji Takahashi

2. Showcasing works made with Nara Yoshitomo

The Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art will also present an exhibition of works from the collection acquired since the museum's opening, which consists mainly of pieces produced on commission. In addition to offerings from artists with local connections, this collection exhibition titled *Heading North* and staged in conjunction with the Sugito Hiroshi show will feature works produced jointly by Sugito and Hirosaki native Nara Yoshitomo in 2004.

At high school Sugito attended a cram school to help him enter art college, and there met Nara, who was working as an instructor while studying at Aichi University of Arts. Their friendship continued to grow over time, and in 2004 the pair collaborated during a residency in Vienna. In 2006 Sugito was then invited by Nara to be part of the *A to Z* show, where he presented a painting.

Collaborations between Sugito and Nara are grounded in a mutual trust nurtured over many years. Their different approaches to form, line and color are stimulating for both, and have spawned a stream of drawings, paintings and sculptures. In recent years Sugito has made revisions to works of his own from the 1990s, and continues to engage with his past self as part of his creative practice. Collaborations between the pair likewise do not start with a completed form in mind, but may be revised and added to over long periods as works in progress. This approach to creating also demonstrates the potential that incomplete artworks possess for the particular richness that comes with changes over time. In addition to a painting executed jointly by Sugito and Nara in 2004, this exhibition presents models for sculptures based on motifs from the time and unveiled in 2022.

3. New works by Sugito Hiroshi that resonate with the red-brick architecture

Sugito turns his gaze to the shapes and textures of objects around him, and reconfigures them. Works evolve out of an interest in the myriad elements that make up a piece of art: the frame or stand, for instance, and the walls and floor of the space in which the art is installed.

The Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art was built of brick around 1923 as a sake brewery, and reborn as an art museum retaining as much of the original look of the warehouse as possible, in accordance with the "succession of memories" concept championed by architect Tane Tsuyoshi, commissioned for the renovations. In putting this exhibition together, Sugito has endeavored to capture the mood and *matière* of the old brick warehouses. As they engage with Sugito's works, visitors will become conscious of the larger space in which they are installed, prompting new discoveries, and new flights of imagination.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience first-hand Sugito Hiroshi's creative practice as it is today, in smaller works consisting of freely-combined familiar materials such as scraps of envelopes, pieces of cardboard, and ceramics; and a group of previously unseen paintings from the 1990s to which the artist has added some extra touches.

SUGITO Hiroshi

Born in Aichi in 1970, In 1992 graduated from the Department of Japanese Painting, Faculty of Arts, Aichi Prefectural College of Arts. He has exhibited extensively both in Japan and internationally since the 1990s.

His major solo exhibitions include *FOCUS* (Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, USA, 2006), *prime and foundation* (Miyagi Museum of Art, Miyagi, Japan, 2015), *frame and refrain* (Musée Bernard Buffet, Shizuoka, Japan, 2015), *particles and release* (Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan, 2016), and *Hiroshi Sugito module or lacuna* (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 2017). He has also held many solo exhibitions overseas. He participated in *YOSHITOMO NARA + graf A to Z* (Yoshii Brick Brewhouse, Hirosaki, 2006) .

In 2018, he received the Minister of Education and Culture Award for Fine Arts.

Collaborator:

HATTORI Kazunari

Hattori Kazunari was born in 1964. After working at advertising firm Light Publicity, he became a freelance graphic designer. Hattori's portfolio includes advertisements for Kewpie Half, art direction for the magazines Ryuko Tsushin, Here and There, and Mayonaka, visual identity planning for the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art, the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo and Niigata City Art Museum, and artwork for the rock band Quruli. Honors include the Mainichi Design Prize, the Kamekura Yusaku Design Award, the ADC Award, and the TDC Grand Prix.

Guest Artist:

Gokula STOFFEL

Official Catalogue

The official catalogue for this exhibition will be published by the publishing label HeHe in the spring of 2026.



SUGITO Hiroshi, *untitled*, 2022
Collection of the Artist
©Hiroshi Sugito, Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery
Photo by Hiroshi Sugito

Collection 2025–26: *Heading North*

Since opening in 2020 the Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art has actively sought to amass a collection unique to its location, with an emphasis on acquiring works that resonate with the museum space and its memories; serve as portals to the wider world; and emerge from the local community. This exhibition showcases works from the collection by domestic and overseas artists, starting with several commissioned to complement the museum's brick construction, and the locality. Look out for creations from the likes of Nara Yoshitomo and Amemiya Yosuke, in a show centering on new additions in 2025.

Artists: AMEMIYA Yosuke, HAN Ishu, KUDO Makiko, NARA Yoshitomo, NINAGAWA Mika, OHMAKI Shinji, Jean-Michel OTHONIEL, Navin RAWANCHAIKUL, SAITO Lei, SATO Tomoko, Chaguin (SUGITO Hiroshi + NARA Yoshitomo), WADA Reijiro, YOSHIDA Shinya

Date: December 5 (Fri.), 2025 – May 17 (Sun.), 2026

Venue: Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art

Exhibition Website: <https://www.hirosaki-moca.jp/exhibitions/collection-2025-2026>

*Admission to this exhibition is included with your ticket for the *SUGITO Hiroshi: flyleaf and liner*.



Jean-michel OTHONIEL, *Hanging Lover*, 2020
Collection of Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art
Photo by Ryo Narita

General Information

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| Exhibition Title: | 5th Anniversary Exhibition <i>SUGITO Hiroshi: flyleaf and liner</i> |
| Date: | December 5 (Fri.), 2025 – May 17 (Sun.), 2026 |
| Venue: | Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art (2-1 Yoshino-cho, Hirosaki City, Aomori, Japan) |
| Opening Hours: | 9:30-17:00 (Dec. 5 to Feb. 28) 9:00-17:00 (Mar. 1 to May 17) Last admission 30 minutes before closing |
| Closed: | Tuesdays (except on Apr. 14, 21, 28 and May. 5), from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, May. 7 |
| Admission [tax included]: | Adults 1,500 yen (1,400 yen) University & College Students 1,000 yen (900 yen) * () Price for a group over 20 people *Hirosaki residents receive a 500-yen discount off the admission price listed above (not valid in conjunction with any other offers or promotions). *Free of charge for high school students and under; international students in Hirosaki city; citizens of Hirosaki over 65, the disabled and one accompanying attendant |
| Organizer: | Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art |
| Special Sponsor: | Tsumie Culture Fund, Starts Corporation Inc. |
| Sponsor: | OBYASHI CORPORATION, NTT FACILITIES, INC., Nishimuragumi |
| Under the patronage of: | The To-o Nippo Press, THE DAILY TOHOKU SHIMBUN, THE MUTSU SHIMPO Press, Aomori Broadcasting Corporation, Aomori Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Asahi Broadcasting Aomori Co., Ltd., Aomori Fm Broadcasting, FM APPLE WAVE, Hirosaki City Board of Education |
| Tel: | +81-172-32-8950 |
| Access: | From JR Hirosaki Station -Take the Konan Bus to the Nakadote-machi stop (app. 9 min.) and walk 4 minutes - 20 minutes on foot - taxi 7 minutes *Please note that parking is not available at the museum. *Please use public transportation or paid parking near the museum. |
| Exhibition Website: | https://www.hirosaki-moca.jp/en/exhibitions/sugito-hiroshi/ |
| SNS: | Instagram/Threads @hirosaki_moca X @hirosaki_moca Facebook @hirosaki.moca |

About the Museum

Hirosaki Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 2020, After renovating the Yoshino-cho Brick Warehouse, a piece of modern industrial heritage and iconic landmark of Hirosaki City constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century. Its buildings were renovated by architect Tane Tsuyoshi.

The goal is to connect the region and the world through contemporary art, offering opportunities to engage with diverse and abundant visions and ideas, and serving as a dynamic cultural hub that stimulates new creativity connected to the past, present and future.



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