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COVID-19 crisis



In an interview for the Goethe-Institut, Mami Kataoka, Director of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and President of CIMAM [International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art], reflects on how the pandemic will change the world, and what gives her hope.

It is essential to heed the ancient wisdom of indigenous peoples, who survived, thousands, even tens of thousands of years ago, without any advanced technology or global economy. First and foremost, we must look for a new form of ecology that can preserve the essence of human life. In the meantime, we must always bear in mind that COVID-19 may be but the harbinger of an even bigger crisis. In this context, we need to get together and think about what would make up a sustainable human society in the long run.

Mami Kataoka

What gives you hope?

The very fact that the bloated global neoliberal economy has come to a temporary standstill is a development that gives me "hope". The virus has achieved something no political power or wealth could have achieved. It gives me hope that we've been given a chance to stop and rethink what's really essential for human society and the future of the planet.

In the world of contemporary art, the global art market has been expanding since the late 2000s, so even the world's leading museums are finding it hard, on their regular budgets, to buy works that ought to be preserved for posterity. Thanks to their business models, museums have become dependent on tourist money and blockbusters, which has eclipsed the museum's function as a place of philosophical reflection on the meaning of human existence, life, time and space.

When questioning the nature of art today and considering how it can help tackle the global challenges of climate change and sustainability, and when reconsidering the purpose of museums and what the art world as such should really be about, we should move back and forth between local and global perspectives. This process holds hope for the future.


[Read full article](#) on **Goethe-Institut** site. Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., online editorial office

Kataoka is Director of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (January 2020-) where she joined its inauguration in 2003. In prior, she was Chief Curator at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (1997-2002). She was also International Curator at the Hayward Gallery, London (2007-2009); Co-Artistic Director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2012); and Artistic Director of the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018). She is also President of CIMAM [International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art] in 2020-2022, where she had served as a board member between 2014-2019. Kataoka is Adjunct Professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design Graduate School of Art and Design Studies and Tokyo University of the Arts.

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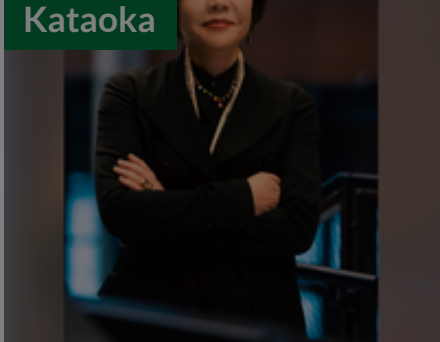
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