GALLERYBATON

Press Release

YUICHI HIRAKO
POSTFOREST

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Gallery Baton

223-9, Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, Korea



Courtesy of Gallery Baton. Photo: Yohan Choi.

Gallery Baton presents *POSTFOREST*, Yuichi Hirako's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Working across painting, sculpture, and installation, Hirako has developed a distinctive visual language centered on hybrid forms drawn from nature. Known internationally for his ecological imagination and message of coexistence, he presents new paintings and sculptures that reimagine the forest as both a natural realm and a layered site where narrative, community, and anonymity intersect.

Hirako grew up surrounded by nature in Okayama Prefecture, Japan. While studying in London, he noticed that urban green spaces, street trees, and indoor plants were largely created for human rest and emotional comfort, and that these plants could not grow in the way they were created to grow. How contemporary society turns nature into an object, rather than allowing it to exist on its own terms, became the question that runs through his work.

This view of nature as an independent being living alongside humans, rather than beneath them, resonates with the philosophy of deep ecology. Rather than directly denouncing environmental damage, Hirako has expressed this conviction consistently through the formal language of painting and sculpture. At the center of his work is a story of human-like figures living unhurried, everyday lives alongside other living beings in a forest on the far side of the world. Dogs, cats, and plants appear like supporting characters in an animated feature: they set the scene, give the story its rhythm, and branch the narrative into smaller stories.

In *Tree, Forest, Mountain*, a large-scale installation first shown in his 2025 solo exhibition *ORIGIN* at the Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art and presented again at Art Basel Unlimited in 2026, Hirako filled a circular platform with hybrid sculptures to form a clustered landscape. Arranged in a ring, the sculptures faced the viewer at the center, not as an anonymous natural backdrop but as beings on equal footing with humans. By bringing people face to face with the nature hey have long put to use, the work restores a horizontal relationship between the two.

In *POSTFOREST*, Hirako extends this relationship into the vertical, presenting suspended sculpture for the first time. Occupying one section of the gallery from floor to ceiling, the work departs from his earlier floor-based clusters, dispersing sculptures of different sizes and forms into the air. Rather than facing the work from a fixed point, visitors walk among the floating forms. Much like moving through a forest, the experience turns the gallery into a space attuned to the body.

The exhibition title reflects the artist's view of history: just as the ways humans see and define nature have changed fundamentally over the past century, the relationship between humans and nature will continue to be reshaped. Hirako embraces this change not as rupture or loss but as a natural transition, and has developed his work with the relationships yet to come in mind. The exhibition invites viewers to reflect on where humans and nature stand today, and to imagine the coexistence ahead.

• **Artist Biography**

Yuichi Hirako (b. 1982) lives and works in Tokyo, Japan. Hirako has held solo exhibitions at numerous museums, including Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art, JP (2025); Keelung Museum of Art, TW (2025); Nagi MOCA, JP (2024); Space K Seoul, KR (2023); and Nerima Art Museum, JP (2022). At Art Basel Unlimited (2026), Hirako presented *Tree, Forest, Mountain* a large-scale installation first unveiled in his solo exhibition *Origin* at the Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art in autumn 2025, further cementing his distinctive artistic world on the global art scene. His works are in the collections of leading art institutions, including Museum Voorlinden, NL; Lisser Art Museum, NL; AkzoNobel Art Foundation, NL; Jean Pigozzi Collection, CH; and By Art Matters, CN.

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