

Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group

## *Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group*

2022.4.27 (Wed) - 2022.6.4 (Sat)

Open on Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri. and Sat., 12:00-18:00

Closed on Sundays, Mondays (Open on 4.29, 5.3-5)

\*To protect public health against COVID-19, we will not hold a reception event, but the artist will still be at the gallery on the opening day.

In cooperation with:

**Smappa!Group**, EDI MAK

KABUKI-CHO SHOPPING CENTER PROMOTION UNION, SEIBU SHINJUKU KITAGUCHI SHOWAKAI, TOKYU CORPORATION, TOKYU RECREATION CO.,LTD., SEIKITOKYU KOGYO CO.,LTD., JAPAN OUTDOOR LIGHTING MFG.CO.,LTD., Startbahn, Inc., MITSUI KOMUTEN



We at ANOMALY are pleased to announce an upcoming solo exhibition of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group. Titled *Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group* this exhibition will run from April 27 (Wed.) to June 4 (Sat.), 2022.

Effective the first day of this exhibition, the name of this group of artists is changing from “Chim↑Pom” to “Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group.” Heralding the birth of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group, this exhibition will have a run that overlaps partly with that of [Happy Spring](#), their highly acclaimed solo exhibition now being held at Mori Art Museum, and [Remember the Days](#), another solo exhibition of theirs to be held at MUJIN-TO Production beginning on April 30. We would be delighted to see you at our exhibition as well and receive your support for it. The particulars behind this change of name can be found at the link “[Notice of Change of Name](#)”. Please also see the [announcement](#) by Smappa!Group about Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group.

Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group has long engaged in vigorous activity outside the framework of “white cubes” as the main sites of contemporary art, and paradoxically widened the acreage of the contemporary art field. Ever since its organization, the group has had a deep connection with “city streets.” Bringing articles from the street and everyday life along with happenings there into art museums and galleries, its members catabolized these venues in a relentless pursuit of the reality of the times, without pulling any punches. In the process, they developed an urban theory from their own unique perspectives.

Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group watched the commotion both before and after the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics held in the midst of the pandemic, and are now seeing the stream of scrap-and-build projects with the approach of the Osaka Kansai Expo. This has made them constantly and keenly aware of what is being selected and what is being removed in the streets of Japan’s cities, and prompted them to probe the shape of cities genuinely endowed with diversity.

The exhibition will display new videos and works utilizing light that were produced with the cooperation of Smappa!Group, a company whose business centers around host clubs in Shinjuku’s Kabuki-cho district, and whose name is also incorporated into the group’s new name. These works are born of collaboration between people who are the denizens of a nightlife zone which has been the target of a barrage of negative criticism, largely unfounded, on suspicion of generating Covid-19 clusters, and who are consequently being excluded from membership in civil society, and a group of artists. Both are also regarded as players in the “water trade”<sup>\*1</sup>.



Production scene, 2022

This exhibition will also display a new, different version of *Libido-Electricity Conversion Machine "EROKITEL,"* another version of which is being shown at Mori Art Museum. *EROKITEL* was made with a street lamp that had actually stood in the Kabuki-cho district. It shined when its sensor caught radio waves from incoming telephone calls by unspecified adults who saw "pink" ads. It converted their libido into electricity as an alternative to use of finite resources to generate electrical power, and was developed for a supply of stable energy that would be permanently available. It is a distinctive piece of "public art" by Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group, who sublimated their determination not to waste any source of energy and their truly ecological and sustainable idea into art. In addition, they divided their Street work that was installed and developed on the grounds of Mori Art Museum as a plot of virtual "land" based on a conception and interpretation along the lines of "lunar land," and made an NFT out of it.



Libido-Electricity Conversion Machine "EROKITEL," 2022

Installation view: Chim↑Pom: Happy Spring, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2022 Photo: Morita Kenji

Photo courtesy: Mori Art Museum, Tokyo

*SUPER RAT* one of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group's signature works, is being displayed, along with a video work commissioned to EDI MAK<sup>2</sup>, not in Mori Art Museum, the site of the aforementioned solo exhibition, but at the [Collaborative Project Space by the Museum and the Artists](#). This is a separate site that was established as a venue for discussion of the related developments and future directions, upon protracted consultation.

Over the more than two months since the opening of *Happy Spring*, Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group engaged in talks with the museum on full publicity for the existence of the Project Space and improvement of the limited reservation system. Although this led to partial improvement, such as the ability to make reservations not only on the day in question but also any time during the exhibition's run beginning in April, the members were seriously concerned that many people had missed the works there up until that time. In response, we at ANOMALY are going to display them at this solo exhibition (if you can make it to the Project Space, be sure to see them there!).

Under the watchwords of "They can exclude us, but they can't exterminate us," Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group are carving out places for their existence with a both assiduous and bright attitude. These days, the concepts of diversity and inclusion are being championed by all, and the question of how to achieve them is the subject of

extensive rethinking and discussion. This exhibition will encourage visitors to ponder the nature of a real world in a vibrant society that recognizes the participation of diverse people as a matter of course, in which all sorts of individuals live together, and how the art world can express this vision.

Please also note that, during the run of the exhibition, we are planning to hold a talk session with certain invitees, including Maki Tezuka\*<sup>3</sup>, who heads Smappa!Group, and people from art circles (we will provide information on the participants as well as the day and time at a later date, so please stand by!).



Maki Tezuka

As themes, Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group take up the commonality of cities, consumerism, plethora and poverty, earthquake disasters, nuclear power, boundaries, media, and other issues bound up with the society in which we are now living. Many of their striking activities and works have stirred up controversy by dealing with taboos and exposing matters of tacit understanding. They have nevertheless come to earnest grips with all issues, constructed highly substantive arguments, and gained unusually high plaudits both inside and outside Japan. In this exhibition as well, we are not presenting “correct views” based on dichotomous outlooks; our intention is instead to open avenues for varied discussion in recognition of the multiplicity of perspectives in our world.

We at ANOMALY have complete confidence in the convictions of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group, EDI MAK, the members of Smappa!Group who are assisting this exhibition, and others involved in it, and will be gratified if our gallery serves as a venue for discussion with and among all sorts of people.

While the world has entered the age of online activities, we would like visitors to experience the actual exhibition on its site, and our gallery will therefore be open even during the Golden Week holiday (except on Sundays and Mondays). We hope to keep running alongside Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group.

We are eagerly looking forward to seeing you at the Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group exhibition!

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## Notes (titles omitted, arbitrary order)

1. This is the literal translation of *mizu-shobai*, a slang Japanese term for types of businesses and occupations that have cloudy future prospects, depend greatly on popularity and people's preferences, and are characterized by uncertain income, as well as for people employed in them. It does not include occupations whose income is liable to be unstable, but not because of popularity or people's preferences, such as day laborers, farmers, and fisherman.

- Excerpted from the following URL, accessed April 22, 2022:

<https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%B0%B4%E5%95%86%E5%A3%B2>

2. Born in Tokyo in 1989, EDI MAK grew up in close proximity to the Kodaira City Local Sewerage Museum. After employment in close proximity to Musashino Art University, he became a video artist with two names.

He frequently produces documentary works using techniques long applied in variety programs in Japan, under another name he uses when making works that are much like documentary films. He has won numerous awards, and is involved in the production of videos in closed scenes under the name "EDI."

3. Maki Tezuka is the chairperson of Smappa!Group, which owns more than 20 businesses, including host clubs, bars, restaurants, and beauty parlors, in Tokyo's Kabuki-cho district. Born in Saitama Prefecture in 1977, he is a full-time director of the Kabuki-cho Shopping District Promotion Union, and has also been certified as a sommelier by the Japan Sommelier Association. He began working in Kabuki-cho in 1996, and went independent after a period in which he was the No. 1 host in the district. With colleagues, he organized the host volunteer group Yacho no Kai, which is engaged in late-night clean-up activities on the district's streets, and is also a director of the NPO green bird. In 2017, he opened the Kabuki-cho Book Center, the district's first bookstore, which attracted a lot of attention. In December 2018, he began a project for nursing-type care revolving around the spirit of hospitality he cultivated through his work in the service trade. He is the author of the book *Kabuki-cho*, Shinjuku (published by Gentosha).

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## Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group (formerly called "Chim↑Pom")

Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group is an artist collective that was organized in Tokyo in 2005 by Ryuta Ushiro, Yasutaka Hayashi, Ellie, Masataka Okada, Motomu Inaoka, and Toshinori Mizuno.

Pursuing the realities of the times, the members of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group have created a steady stream of critically-minded works for all-out intervention in contemporary society. They have not only taken part in exhibitions around the world but also executed various projects of their own.

They reacted with the mindsets of those affected to the chronicles of exposure to radiation at Hiroshima and Fukushima, and sparked successive discussions that drew in the mass media. They conceived, launched, and participated in *Don't Follow the Wind*, a long-term international exhibition that opened in the nuclear exclusion zone in Fukushima in 2015. This is an exhibition that people will not be able to visit until the ban on entry into the zone is lifted, and is still being held. Directing their attention to the function of borderlines and their involvement with individual freedom as their next themes, they approached the wall between Mexico and the United States and built a treehouse to serve as a "U.S.A. visitor center" along the border over the years 2016 - 2017. In this way, they intervened in connection with the issue of immigration and national borders.

Right from the collective's founding, the members have developed all sorts of projects that are based on the theme of urban theory and emblematic of the relationship between individuals and the public sphere. These may be exemplified by *SUPER RAT* (2006 -), a work using poison-resistant rats they caught themselves; *BLACK OF DEATH* (2008 & 2013), in which they summoned and led a flock of crows in the sky; and *LOVE IS OVER* (2014), which unfolded on the street around

the reception for the wedding of Ellie, one of the members, and turned into a demonstration. They further expanded the possibilities of the street with *Chim↑Pom Street* (2016 -), which incorporated a street for implementation of public arrangements right into the lot of their own artist-run space. In 2017, they constructed a 200-meter-long *Chim↑Pom Street* from a public road into the museum premises for the Asian Art Biennial held in Taiwan. The work attained legendary status for promulgation of its own regulations transcending the public-private dichotomy and use as a site for block parties and demonstrations.

In 2018, amid the urban redevelopment in preparation for the Tokyo Olympics, the collective prepared *Ningen Restaurant*, a project sited in a Kabuki-cho building shortly before it was to be razed. The creation had a tremendous impact as a live art event that mixed a variety of people and places, and showcased spontaneous ways of life to society as a whole.

Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group have also prepared works on themes such as environmental problems arising from massive consumption and waste, and the lives of the members themselves. For many of their projects, they have created forums for discussion and archives through the publication of books and other materials, in order not to consume or have them consumed as one-shot pieces. They keep projects going while morphing them in diverse ways, to serve as warnings about happenings that are liable to be buried in the glut of news.

In addition, the members of Chim↑Pom from Smappa!Group have been very active curating exhibitions of other artists who are living in the same age and working in all kinds of genres as well as planning events. These activities are transforming and amplifying not only the scope of artists but also things on their periphery.

Some of these project-based works have been acquired for collection in museums both in Japan and other countries, including the Guggenheim and the Centre Pompidou. As one of the most prominent artist collectives in all of Asia, the group remains in vigorous activity aimed at opening up a new age.