

# CHIM↑POM: HAPPY SPRING

FEBRUARY 18 [FRI] - MAY 29 [SUN], 2022 MORI ART MUSEUM [53F, ROPPONGI HILLS MORI TOWER] ET AL.

## CELEBRATING JAPAN'S MOST RADICAL ARTIST COLLECTIVE IN THEIR LARGEST RETROSPECTIVE

The Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, is pleased to announce *Chim↑Pom: Happy Spring* to be on view from Friday, February 18, to Sunday, May 29, 2022.

Equipped with highly original ideas and impressive energy, artist collective Chim↑Pom has undertaken numerous projects intervening in society in ways that constantly confound our expectations. With themes ranging from cities and consumerism to gluttony and poverty, Japanese society, the atomic bomb, earthquakes, images of stardom, the mass media, borders, and the nature of publicness, their works serve as powerful statements on a plethora of phenomena and challenges in modern society, delivered mostly with a healthy dose of humor or irony.

With seemingly uncanny foresight, Chim↑Pom has also addressed in a number of their previous works the social issues of infection and discrimination against people with contagious diseases, and of bias, contamination and borders, all thrown into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever perhaps is the time to observe their thought-provoking knack for raising issues pertinent to the zeitgeist.

This will be the first-ever retrospective of Chim↑Pom, bringing together major works from the start of their seventeen-year career to more recent years, plus new work produced for this exhibition. Artworks will be arranged by theme - e.g., cities and publicness, Hiroshima, the Great East Japan Earthquake - highlighting matters consistently addressed by the artists, while examining the collective's oeuvre in its entirety. Dynamic exhibition design, rich in creative ingenuity, will also assist in shedding new light on the ever-surprising world of Chim↑Pom.

The title *Happy Spring* signals Chim↑Pom's hope for a brighter spring even amid this seemingly never-ending pandemic, and that we retain our powers of imagination even if that long-awaited season arrives in the depths of adversity. In these unpredictable times, the powerful, convention-busting works of this enduring, but equally-unpredictable group of artists are certain to excite the imagination, and serve as a guide as we join in contemplating a better future.



*Build-Burger*

2018

Mixed media (3 layers of concrete floors cropped from "Ningen Restaurant," various furniture and objects from each floor of the building)

400 x 360 x 280 cm (left), 186 x 170 x 155 cm (right)

In cooperation with Ningen Restaurant, Smappal Group, Koto Hiroya

Private collection (left)

Courtesy: ANOMALY, Tokyo

Installation view: *Grand Open – Marvelous Liberation –*, ANOMALY, Tokyo, 2018

Photo: Morita Kenji

### PRESS RELEASE

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## BIOGRAPHY

Formed 2005 in Tokyo, artist collective Chim ↑ Pom (members are: Ushiro Ryuta, Hayashi Yasutaka, Ellie, Okada Masataka, Inaoka Motomu, and Mizuno Toshinori) has taken part in exhibitions across the globe, in addition to designing and implementing various projects of their own. In 2015 they opened the artist-run space “Garter” in Koenji, Tokyo. They also conceived the idea for *Don't Follow the Wind* (March 11, 2015–), an international exhibition in the Fukushima exclusion zone that “no one can actually go see” until the ban on return is lifted, launched the project off the ground, and participated as artists. Also in 2015, Chim ↑ Pom won the Best Emerging Artist Award at the Prudential Eye Awards. Their solo exhibitions in recent years include: *So See You Again Tomorrow, Too?* (The Kabuki-cho Shopping Center Promotion Union Building, Tokyo, 2016); *Non-Burnable* (Dallas Contemporary, TX, 2017); and *Threat of Peace (Hiroshima!!!!!!)* (Art in General, New York, 2019), while their group exhibitions include: 29th São Paulo Biennial (2010); Asian Art Biennial 2017 (National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung); *Global(e) Resistance* (Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2020), *HERE AND NOW at Museum Ludwig: together for and against it* (Cologne, 2021–2022) and more.



Photo: Yamaguchi Seiha

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Exhibition Title:** *Chim ↑ Pom: Happy Spring*

**Organizer:** Mori Art Museum

**Curated by:** Kondo Kenichi (Senior Curator, Mori Art Museum)

**Exhibition Period:** February 18 [Fri] – May 29 [Sun], 2022

**Venue:** Mori Art Museum (53F, Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo) et al.

**Hours:** 10:00-22:00 | Tue: 10:00-17:00

\* Admission until 30 minutes before closing. | \* Open every day. | \* Open until 22:00 on Tuesday, May 3, 2022.

\* See the Mori Art Museum website for our countermeasures against COVID-19.

<https://art-view.roppongihills.com/en/info/countermeasures/index.html>

### Admission:

	[ Weekdays ]		[ Sat., Sun. & Holidays ]	
	On-Site	Online	On-Site	Online
Adults	¥ 1,800	¥ 1,600	¥ 2,000	¥ 1,800
Students (University/High School)	¥ 1,200	¥ 1,100	¥ 1,300	¥ 1,200
Children (Age 4 through Junior High School)	¥ 600	¥ 500	¥ 700	¥ 600
Seniors (Ages 65 and over)	¥ 1,500	¥ 1,300	¥ 1,700	¥ 1,500

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\* It is encouraged to make advance booking for a designated date/time slot and purchase the admission ticket on the booking website. The date on which advance bookings for the exhibition starts will be announced on the Mori Art Museum website at a later date. [www.mori.art.museum/en](http://www.mori.art.museum/en)

\* Admissions without advance bookings will be allowed so far as the time slots have not filled up on the day of your visit.

\* All prices include tax.

\* Ticket also valid for admission into the following Mori Art Museum small programs to run concurrently:

*MAM Collection 014: Gravity and Inversion, Microcosmos and Macrocosmos - Tateishi Tiger, Yin Xiuzhen, Iwasaki Takahiro and Kaneiji Teppei; MAM Screen 015: Lu Yang; and MAM Research 008: Suddenly Turning Visible - Art and Architecture in Southeast Asia (1969-1989).*

\* Admissions to Tokyo City View, Sky Deck and Mori Arts Center Gallery are separate.

**General Inquiries:** 050-5541-8600 (Hello Dial, within Japan) / +81-(0)47-316-2772 (Hello Dial, from overseas)

[www.mori.art.museum/en](http://www.mori.art.museum/en)



**BLACK OF DEATH**  
2008  
Lambda print, video  
81 x 117.5 cm (photo), 9 min. 13 sec. (video)  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo



**"A Drunk Pandemic"**  
2019-2020  
Private collection  
Commissioned and produced by Manchester International Festival and Contact, 2019  
Curated by Contact Young Curators  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
Photo: Michael Pollard

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

### Everything from Earliest to High-Profile and New Works in a Single, Comprehensive Retrospective

*Chim↑Pom: Happy Spring* will bring together a large selection of the extraordinary sextet's best-known work, from early classic "Thank You Celeb Project I'm BOKAN" (2007) to the A-bomb-themed *Making the Sky of Hiroshima "PIKA!"* (2009) and *LEVEL 7 feat. "Myth of Tomorrow"* (2011); numerous larger works such as the "Build-Burger" series (2016/2018); small, humorous pieces, and an array of immersive/experiential works, in what will be the world's first comprehensive retrospective exhibition of work by the internationally renowned Chim↑Pom.

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## ■ The Exhibition Personally Designed by the Artists to Astound and Delight!

This will be distinctly different to the usual, chronologically-arranged retrospective. Works will be exhibited by themes such as cities and publicness, the physical body, and borders, and multiple viewing routes provided to encourage diverse readings of the exhibition. Visitors will also find themselves plunged into some dynamic exhibition spaces, including one with asphalt, and an entire gallery composed into a single giant installation featuring multiple works. A fascinating lineup of events and actions is also planned on site for the duration of the exhibition.

## ■ Two Newly-Commissioned Works, Including an On-Site Nursery

The exhibition will include a new video installation conceived around the event of Ellie giving birth in 2020. A nursery (daycare center) will also be set up at the exhibition, in a new art project “Crying Museum” inspired by the child-raising challenges of Chim↑Pom’s generation. The idea is to enable more people to view the exhibition, while simultaneously raising awareness of difficulties for young families in Japan.

## ■ Joining Visitors to Ponder the Concept of “Publicness”

Not long ago, Chim↑Pom built a private road in the grounds of their studio on private land, allowing anyone to pass through. In Taiwan, they created a long street passing through the interior and outdoor spaces of an art museum, and formulated a set of original rules to apply there. By this use of the “street” as a theme, they urge us to turn our thoughts to matters of “publicness,” and “the public and individual.”

## ■ Revisiting Debates and Dialogues around Works by Chim↑Pom

Some of Chim↑Pom’s past projects have ignited debate, those on Hiroshima and the Great East Japan Earthquake proving particularly controversial. This exhibition will revisit such controversies, examining them from multiple viewpoints and presenting not only the works themselves but timelines and related material, and setting out the arguments for and against the works.

## ■ Things Revealed 10 Years on from the 2011 Quake, and Now amid a Pandemic

Ever since the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, Japanese artists have been working more than ever to help build a better society, and Chim↑Pom is no exception, undertaking multiple projects after the disaster. Now, ten years on, they will revisit these projects.

It so happens that a number of Chim↑Pom’s projects of the past decade, such as the “border”-themed project carried out on the Mexico-US border in 2016-2017, and their large-scale participatory project at the 2019 Manchester International Festival, which dealt with the historical connection between a 19th-century cholera epidemic in the city, and beer, unintentionally deal with social issues highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Chim↑Pom also continues their sharp observations on the state of Japanese society, for example, in a new work set in Tokyo during 2020’s State of Emergency. *Chim↑Pom: Happy Spring* is designed to provide a platform for discussing these and other Chim↑Pom activities, with reference to the current social climate.

The latest exhibition press images are available on our website for downloads:  
<https://press.mori.art.museum/en/press-img/>

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## EXHIBITION THEMES

### I. CITIES AND PUBLICNESS

Chim↑Pom has favored urban settings for many of their projects right from the beginning. In *Gold Experience* (2012), for example, they turned a garbage bag into a gigantic, fun piece of sculpture. More recently, their focus on cities has developed further to encompass discussions of urban theory and commonality / publicness, including in the “Scrap & Build” projects (2016-2017), *Street* (2017-2018), and “A Drunk Pandemic” (2019-2020).



*Street*  
2017-2018 On-site installation  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
Installation view: Asian Art Biennial 2017, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, 2017-2018  
Photo: Maeda Yuki

### 2. THE PHYSICAL BODY

Physical expression is fundamental to Chim↑Pom, and has been from the collective's early days, when they took to the streets armed with nothing more than themselves and a video camera. Advances in CG technology mean that now they could probably produce works without actually using their bodies, but for the members of Chim↑Pom, the body itself remains central to artistic expression, even if that means tattooing their flesh, fasting, or repeated vomiting. It is this very realness that has the power to astound.



KOKURISAN TATTOO  
2008  
Lambda print  
83 x 52 cm  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

### 3. BORDERS

Since 2014, Chim↑Pom has been engaged in “The other side” series dealing with the problem of America’s southern border. The title is taken from the name commonly used for the US by those living on the Mexican side. The Chim↑Pom team also conceived the idea for *Don’t Follow the Wind* (March 11, 2015-), an international exhibition in the Fukushima exclusion zone that “no one can actually go see” until the ban on return is lifted, and has been participating as artists themselves. “Borders” is one of the themes that Chim↑Pom has tackled consistently throughout the years, and one perhaps even more important than ever in these pandemic days of lockdowns and restricted mobility.



U.S.A. Visitor Center (from the project “The other side”)  
2017  
Giclee print  
66 x 100 cm  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
Photo: Matsuda Osamu

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## 4. HIROSHIMA

*Making the Sky of Hiroshima “PIKA!”* (2009) is a work that captures the moment in 2008 when the artists chartered a skywriting plane to write the word “Pika” (evoking the flash of the bomb) above the A-Bomb Dome in Hiroshima. The artists’ intention was to render visually, and in comic-book style, the growing indifference to the peace on which contemporary Japanese society is founded, but when misunderstanding and speculation were added to the mix, the result was controversy. Having apologized to A-bomb survivors, their families and supporters for not giving sufficient advance notice of the stunt, Chim ↑ Pom has subsequently continued to converse and occasionally collaborate with them and the wider Hiroshima community on a number of projects. Subsequent Hiroshima-themed works include *Pavilion* (2013-) and *Non-Burnable* (2017) both featuring origami paper cranes, plus the still-burning flame from the bomb in *We Don’t Know God* (2018).



*Making the Sky of Hiroshima “PIKA!”*  
2009

Lambda print, video  
66.7 x 100 cm (photo), 5 min. 35 sec. (video)  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
Photo: Cactus Nakao

## 5. THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE

In the immediate wake of 2011’s devastating Great East Japan Earthquake, Chim ↑ Pom undertook a number of projects related to the quake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear power plant accident. Starting with *Never Give Up* (2011), this period saw the emergence of some of their best-known works such as *REAL TIMES* (2011) and *KI-AI 100* (2011), while in *LEVEL 7 feat. “Myth of Tomorrow”* (2011) they added, guerilla-fashion, a picture showing the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant, in a blank space at the lower right of Okamoto Taro’s *Myth of Tomorrow* mural in Shibuya Station. An ongoing project in the quake exclusion zone, among other quake-related ventures, indicates that a decade on the disaster remains an important theme for Chim ↑ Pom.



*LEVEL 7 feat. “Myth of Tomorrow”*  
2011

Acrylic on paper, PVC panel, video, and others  
84 x 200 cm (painting), 6 min. 35 sec. (video)  
Collection: The Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum, Tokyo  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo

## 6. MAY, 2020, TOKYO

Chim ↑ Pom installed billboards painted with cyanotype sensitizer in various locations around the capital for a project undertaken in May 2020, during Japan’s COVID-19 State of Emergency. The texts “Tokyo 2020” and “Atarashii Seikatsu-Youshiki (New normal)” on these were designed to be unexposed, and left white. Incorporating sun, shadow, wind and rain, these works could be described as the open air and time, etched in blue, of streets almost deserted during the state of emergency, when people were urged to “stay at home.” With deceptive simplicity, these works express the bizarre reality of Tokyo whose blueprint for a bright future was now lost.



*May, 2020, Tokyo (Hey-rashai) - Drawing a Blueprint -*  
2020 Cyanotype print, gelatin, canvas, iron frame  
175.5 x 352.3 x 4.5 cm  
Takahashi Ryutaro Collection, Tokyo  
Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
Production view: Shinjuku, Tokyo

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## 7. ELLIE

Through her actions over the years, including a Cambodian mine-clearing and fundraising project with a theme of charity and celebrity culture; and applying to city authorities for permission to stage a demonstration, then staging a wedding parade for herself through the streets in a social scrutinizing of the marriage system, Chim↑Pom member Ellie has consistently offered new perspectives on some of the world's most deep-rooted social issues. From occasional appearances in the mass media, where she is viewed as a pop icon, to authorship of high-brow articles for a literary magazine, and everything in between, Ellie's activities, and indeed the very nature of her presence, defy categorization. At first glance she may also seem to serve as the face of Chim↑Pom, but in this show we examine the many aspects of Ellie that do not fit neatly into conventional gender norms, feminist discourse, or the usual image of an artist.

**\* Notes on the individual works are to be uploaded to the Mori Art Museum website at a later date.  
[www.mori.art.museum/en](http://www.mori.art.museum/en)**



SPEECH (from the project "Thank You Celeb Project I'm BOKAN")  
 2007

Video  
 1 min. 53 sec.

Courtesy: ANOMALY and MUJIN-TO Production, Tokyo  
 Production view: Shinjuku, Tokyo

## RELATED INFORMATION

### Crowdfunding for New Art Project “Crying Museum”: The Original Coloring Book Named a Hot Reward, with a Coloring Contest Also Scheduled

For the new art project entitled “Crying Museum” where Chim↑Pom opens a nursery (daycare center) at the exhibition, there is going to be a crowdfunding carried out for the purpose of raising funds for its operation. This new art project was essentially inspired by the social circumstances of Japan today where it is difficult for the child-rearing generation to casually visit museums, but how many days it can be operated in fact will depend on your support. The target amount is 4 million yen with a stretch goal set. There are six different support amounts: from 1,000 yen to 330,000 yen (tax included), and there will be various rewards. The most notable reward will be the Original Coloring Book by Chim↑Pom (common reward across the board). With the provided Coloring Book data, you will be able to not only color as you like, but also apply for the “Coloring Contest” scheduled as a project-related event. Aside from the members of Chim↑Pom, Aida Makoto, Higashimura Akiko and Kawamura Kosuke will be the judges to decide the winners.



“Crying Museum” illustration/referential image

**Crowdfunding Campaign Period:** 0:00, Saturday, January 15, 2022 – 23:59, Monday, March 31, 2022

**Details:** See the MOTION GALLERY web page \* Japanese-language only

[https://motion-gallery.net/projects/moriartmuseum\\_chimpom\\_2022](https://motion-gallery.net/projects/moriartmuseum_chimpom_2022)

**Inquiries about the Crowdfunding:** [happyspring@mori.art.museum](mailto:happyspring@mori.art.museum) (E-mail)

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