

Arts Council Forum 2021

**Production and
connoisseurship
to support
expressionists**

Session 2 Report

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About Arts Council Forum

Arts Council Tokyo organizes forums aiming to address current and important themes in the field of arts and culture. Through discussion among experts from various fields, we aim to explore arts and culture-related measures that affirm and enhance Tokyo's standing as a world city.

Outline

In recent years, there has been much discussion about the “value” of arts and culture; this is partly attributable to the fact that the continuance of arts and culture-generating activities is under threat as the fabric of society undergoes drastic change in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, something which has resulted in national and local governments stepping up relief measures. At the same time this situation has called into question more than ever the meaning of support for arts and culture, and there is more interest in the value of arts and culture and its relationship to people's lives. However, “value” in terms of arts and culture is complex, and changes depending on the situation and the values we are talking about. Sometimes it can be difficult to get a fair evaluation from a third party.

In order to continue long term artistic and cultural activities and set further outlooks and objectives, the formulation of a strategic plan clarifies the outcomes of activities and projects and allows us to set out a variety of values. In this forum, guests in a position to discover and nurture value in each expressive field give us their real and practical views from the frontlines.



Session 2 Speakers

Tomio Koyama (Tomio Koyama Gallery representative)



Tomio Koyama graduated from Tokyo University of Arts in 1987, and opened Tomio Koyama Gallery in 1996 in Sagacho, Koto-ku, Tokyo. He has exhibited artists from Japan, the U.S., Germany, Argentina, Malaysia, Cambodia, and other countries. Since its opening, the gallery has actively participated in art fairs outside of Japan to introduce Japanese artists. On the other hand, he also seeks to enrich and expand the market in Japan, and focuses on discovering and nurturing young artists. He is currently the president of Contemporary Art Dealers Association Nippon (CADAN).

Nobuaki Doi (New Deer inc. representative)



Nobuaki Doi is a Producer of the Media Arts Division of the Hiroshima International Peace Culture Festival and Artistic Director of the New Chitose Airport International Animation Film Festival. He launched New Dire Inc. in 2015 to develop a multifaceted business introducing animation works from around the world through production, film festival, distribution, writing and lecturing.

Moderator: Norihide Mori



Norihide Mori is Full-time lecturer, Otsuma Women's University International Center. Specializes in aesthetics and philosophy of art.

【Mori】 I would like to start Session 2 of the Arts Council Forum “Producing and Connoisseurship to Support Artists”. I’m Norihide Mori, the moderator. I research philosophy and aesthetics at Otsuma Women’s University, and speak from the position of an academic tonight.

I will start by introducing the two speakers in Session 2.

The first is Mr. Tomio Koyama owner of the Tomio Koyama Gallery.

Next is Mr. Nobuaki Doi. Apart from being the Representative of New Deer inc.,

First, both of you will introduce your recent activities and projects, and then we will move on to the discussion.

Now, could you please start Koyama-san.

【Koyama】 I opened gallery in 1996 in Koto-ku, Tokyo. It later moved to Roppongi in 2016 and is opening a space in Tennozu in 2022. Since its opening, the gallery has actively participated in international art fairs and has promoted Japanese artists of the same generation both in Japan and abroad. Currently, in addition to artists such as KiShio Suga, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Mika Ninagawa, and Richard Tuttle, the gallery also introduces ceramic artists.

The gallery's basic job is to handle, exhibit, and sell a variety of artists. Most recently, we have had an exhibition of an artist who is 86 years old. You can see a list of the artists we carry at the gallery on our Artists page.

Currently, I am also working as the Representative Director of the Contemporary Art Dealers Association Nippon, and is putting various efforts into developing the industry.

【Mori】 Thank you very much, Koyama-san. To continue, please introduce yourself, Doi-san.

【Doi】 I am involved with almost all aspects of the animation industry, and founded a company called New Deer in 2015. Before that, I was a PhD student and researcher at the Laboratory of Representational Culture Theory. I did my dissertation on the Russian animator Yuri Norstein, which had the honor of being published by Film Art, Inc. At present, I have published three books. In particular, I review and critique short animations – as well as animations that have a non-commercial element – from around the world. Recently, I have discussed so-called anime works, in various ways as well. I was included as a supervisor in the animation feature article of “Bijutsu Techo” in February 2020.

Additionally, I sometimes work as a curator of art exhibitions, and I curated an exhibition of game art and indie games, called the “In a Gamescape” exhibition, at the ICC with Akihiko Taniguchi. At the Towada Art Center, I did a group exhibition called “Hibernation Image Festival Vol. 1: The Fountain of Recovery”, which gathered young Japanese creators together and showcased their work. Apart from that, I also worked as the curator at animation film festivals overseas featuring Japanese works, or act as a judge at the Ars Electronica.

That’s my work as an individual, but as the company New Deer, I am distributing foreign long animations. Basically, I like works by individual creators, and I introduce works made by individual creators, or other similar cases. I have currently released three pieces of work, including “The Boy and the World” which was nominated for an Academy Award, as well as other works that have gathered quite a bit of attention, and I am planning to release one more around next year. As I think there are many listeners who are probably unfamiliar with the animations that I deal with, I will introduce a few.

First is the newest work to be distributed, “Ville Neuve”.



This work was created in Quebec, Canada. In terms of budget, it cost around one hundred and twenty million yen, and almost all of this came from grants from Quebec. Using these kinds of grant systems – outside Japan, this culture of providing grants is extremely important for the field of animation – diverse expressions are made around the world, and I search for these in film festivals around the world, purchase and showcase these animation films in Japan.

Since 2014, I have operated and directed the New Chitose Airport International Animation Festival, which is held at the beginning of November every year at the airport’s permanent theater. Here, around two thousand applications, most of them for competition, come in every year, and we choose the grand prix among them. I meticulously do my curation work every year, including what we call anime works, and right now, I am organizing a film festival where I am putting together a collection of animations that I find the most interesting.

This year in August, I will set up for the first time a film festival called “Hiroshima Animation Season.” Hiroshima City originally held an animation festival from 1985 called “Hiroshima International Animation Festival”, which had a long history, but that has stopped just recently, so people brought up a new festival, and that was when they approached me.

In addition, recently I have also been creating new works. Apart from purchasing the works of overseas creators to show in Japan, I am continuing an enterprise that introduces Japan’s creators overseas. This year, I am working with a French studio called MIYU Productions, which is planning to release a long animation that is based on a short story called “Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman”, which is an early work of Haruki Murakami. Currently, I have created five short animation works. For example, “Anxious Body”, directed by Yoriko Mizushiri, premiered at last year’s Cannes Film Festival and has received several awards. This work was also exhibited at Towada Art Center, and if it were true, it would have been unveiled in Japan just now. Unfortunately, due to the impact of COVID-19, the art center was closed, so the exhibition has been postponed until after March, but you can see them at the “Arts Towada 10th Anniversary ‘Inter + Play’” (January 22nd, 2022 to May 29th, 2022).



Director Mizushiri is a creator who makes animation that specializes in expressing the sense of touch.

As for the others, we have “Birds in the Peninsula”, directed by Atsushi Wada which will premier at the Berlin International Film Festival held in February this year, and a new work from Director Sawako Kabuki, who also often includes sexual motifs. And in the work called “Emergences”, Denis Lavant, a great French actor, has been asked to play a voice-only role, and there is an endeavor to put into image form the mescaline (a hallucinogenic) experiences of the author Henri Michaux. This work was included in the National Film Board of Canada, making him the second Japanese person to take on the challenge, and he was able to make this into reality. Apart from that, I am also preparing a short animation called “Floating Around.”

Furthermore, as a ongoing endeavor, I am thinking about whether it is possible to successfully promote the creators who I think are interesting into the so-called existing animation industry market, and I’m setting up a plan for a long work by Director Mirai Mizue – who is famous for abstract animation – based on “Journey to the West”; right now, it is being introduced to the audiences in the United States, etc.

Director Atsushi Wada, whom I introduced earlier, is experimenting with artistic expressions aimed at children, and he made a game in 2020 called “My Exercise.” Japanese gaming YouTubers took interest in this, and there have been around 2 million playbacks of gameplay videos of this game.



Although it’s called a game, it is a little bizarre. You push a button, and a boy on the screen does a sit-up and pushes himself into the embrace of an Akita dog, making a nice sound and that’s it. It’s available right now on application stores, etc., so please check it out. I’m also promoting a series of short animations overseas called “Ikimono-san”, using the creator’s ideas and world views.

Lastly, I am also recently working on producing animations for commercials and live-action films. For example, I worked on producing – in a documentary where Director Hirokazu Koreeda closely followed Rikako Ikee – a work that expresses through animation the emotion of fear that Ikee-san came face-to-face with when recovering from leukemia.

In these ways, I mainly introduce animations, but as a methodology of this, I also review, distribute and create.

【Mori】 Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to move on to the discussion. Firstly, both of you are involved in discovering young talent, so can you tell us a bit more about this? Even though it feels like you two are doing quite different things.

【Koyama】 Indeed. Listening to Doi-san, I got the impression that he seems incredibly busy, and I frankly wondered about what kinds of markets there are and where they are to be found. Because for us we can assume that there are already established galleries, art museums and collectors, so to speak. After the war, art museums were made, and I don't know why, but they collected the works of Japanese creators. This included things that sell and things that don't sell, and we talked about archives earlier, but they collected them as if they were some sort of socially collective capital, as memories of the region. Basically something like this has been established as a system after all this time. When I think about this, I feel that – when we choose young artists – we have to include in our judgment what kind of creator is suitable given the existence of this kind of system. Of course, I think that there is a global trend as well, and I am interested to see how Doi-san's field selects creators within this situation. You said earlier that there are two thousand applicants for the New Chitose Airport film festival, so that must mean there are that many creators out there. After finding talent from among them, how do you later drop them into the market?

【Doi】 Well, I actually don't have an answer to that yet either. That's also why I do all sorts of enterprises. The short animations that I deal with is also a field that – when you look at it historically – was founded on the presence of the socialist sphere. For example, Yuri Norstein, whom I specialize in, is a creator who was active in Russia in the Soviet Union era, and he later became unable to present new works when the capitalist era came around. In other words, I think that it can be called a market with the meaning that there is that socialist sphere. A culture of creating without thinking that much about market, with money from the state as a basis, was present in the latter half of the 20th century. In Japan, there were also people who, seeing what was created in this situation, went on to create their own works without those kinds of backing of funds from the state.

【Koyama】 I see. How strange.

【Doi】 Indeed. For example, in France, grants properly come from the state, and outstanding artists apply for these grants, and there are people who make a living from continuing to make these short creations, but this does not happen that much in Japan. There isn't a custom of paying money for short creations, so it's difficult to pay for... Here's an example of what New Deer is currently doing. For example, we bring proposals like maybe we should try and make it a video game, or "there's this kind of talent in the so-called anime market" and make use of France's grant money. In regard to using this grant money system, it's fine as long as the French production is involved, even if there are no French people involved.

【Koyama】 In other words, you apply in France and the money comes from there.

【Doi】 Yes, so strictly speaking, it becomes a French work. There are small versions of these kinds of grants in Japan as well, so New Deer applies for funds in Japan and the French production raise funds in their own country, and by putting them together, we manage to get a budget on a scale of millions or occasionally tens of millions to create a new piece of work. But in terms of how it will make the money after it's created, almost none. There are instances where it is sold to television broadcasters, though. Alternatively, MIYU Productions has a gallery in Paris that specializes in animation creators, so we sell artwork there. The President of MIYU Productions likes art and film to begin with, and they create animations because animation satisfies both of his interests. Therefore, as it involves quite a deep knowledge on art as well, there is also the desire of promoting animation creators as artists as well.



【Koyama】 So you are selling that animation as an artwork.

【Doi】 Apparently there are still many people who draw by hand, so if anything, there are more instances of these artists selling the original artworks used for the animation. In the case of France, costs for creation supporting from the government, so there is a profit.

【Koyama】 Generally, around how many people watch works of animation?

【Doi】 For example, in French television, there is a rule that, out of what is broadcasted, a certain percentage of it has to be French works, and the budget for that will also go to the television studio. In a way, you can call it a large self-performance of one's own work, but you can showcase creative works in that kind of way. Also, there are still many parents in France who do not want to show Disney to their children, so in terms of works for children, we gather several together and release them in theaters aiming at this kind of group.

【Koyama】 In Japan, short animations are made with someone like NHK Educational TV paying the money, but is this something on a much bigger scale in the case of France?

【Doi】 Yes. The country's film center does it in a systematic way.

【Koyama】 If that's the case, it's a matter of how to find talent, isn't it? For example, when you're organizing the festival held in New Chitose Airport or Hiroshima and applications come in, who are the people who assess them?

【Doi】 Each film festival has its own selection committee. Unsurprisingly, there are thousands of applications and it is impossible for one person to watch all of them, so the applications are divided among the committee members. From there, we reduce the number by selecting around 50 or 100 nominated works. Then, for example, we invite famous animation creators or directors to the film festival, organize them into a panel of judges and get them to watch the works. In this way, we get them to decide which works deserves the grand prize.

【Koyama】 I see. It really does feel like a film festival. And from there, it leads to producing or distributing works of the creators that you think are good, right? Discovering new talent in the art galleries does not happen on such a large scale. For example, you look at graduation works and if you find one interesting person, you approach them.

In Session 1, Mr. Yamamoto said that "It's not good for too many people to come to the art gallery", but to put it simply, with galleries, as long as you have twenty people who really make a purchase, you can make a living. In that sense, it's a totally different market. And there is the existing system which I mentioned earlier. My question is whether these kinds of animations, for example award-winning works, are made into a collection somewhere. And without being limited to award-winning works, is there a place where animation works as a whole can be collected?

【Doi】 Depending on the film festival, there are places that establish libraries where award-winning works can be watched, but generally speaking, there aren't any places like the one that you described. That's why there are some places that give prize money, and basically, on the creator's side, it's like a way of getting a grant for their next project through the awards. Nowadays people upload their short animations themselves on YouTube or Vimeo, so you can say that that fulfills the role of an archive of some kind. Although I don't know how long those kinds of services will continue.

【Koyama】 No money comes out of that, right?

【Doi】 Correct.

【Koyama】 So that means there are none of the social systems that the art genre like ours has.

I really hope that the “National Media Art General Center”, which has already been budgeted by the government, will become a reality.

【Doi】 I hope so too. Surely it is a problem when foreigners say that they like Japanese animation, but when they come to Japan, there aren't any places where you can watch them. I guess you can count the National Film Archive of Japan as one of such places, but that's about it. However, you can only see famous works there and it includes non-animated films as well, so the number of animation works is quite small. To begin with, the film archive has no curator that specializes in animation, and this is pretty strange. There are overseas countries that have a specialist curator. In addition, around 50% of the works archived in Canada's Cinémathèque québécoise are animations, and things like this really make me feel that this is a field that is not given much significance in Japan.

【Koyama】 When you think about that, animation is a field represented in the so-called Cool Japan, but there aren't any public art museums for them. There is a facility in Kyoto City which was made by refurbishing an elementary school, but it would be better to have a more public facility that is of a larger scale. If only we can collect anime and manga as something the country should be proud of.

I feel the same when it comes to the fields of architecture and fashion as well. For example, Japanese people have won the influential Pritzker Architecture Prize for architecture, but there is no public architectural museum in Japan. There is an architecture section in the MoMA (The Museum of Modern Art, New York), but there isn't one in the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, is there?

When I think about this, I find it really strange that fields like anime, manga, architecture and fashion, which are highly recognized worldwide and contain culture that Japan should be proud of, are not properly archived.

【Doi】 In the case of manga, which has a strong market to begin with, then there are places like the National Diet Library and the Kyoto International Manga Museum. Manga has a “physical form” in the shape of a book, so it is easier to archive.

【Koyama】 They have exhibitions too.

【Doi】 Yes. If we are talking about animation, there's the question of what to collect. Film archives keep 35 mm films or, more recently, DCPs (Digital Cinema Package), but it's mainly films that are kept. That's why animation is in a bit of a strange spot. If they have that artistic part about them, they also have a film part to them, and if you go further, they also have an aspect as a form of content. I think things like anime works, as they are called, belongs to a category that doesn't have a proper foundation of some sort, while in other aspects, they do have a firm foundation. However, anime is fundamentally founded on commerce, so that can't be thought of as an archive section in particular. Some studios, for example, Production I.G, have an archive section, but it doesn't directly earn revenue, and costs money instead, so not much value can be found in that. Meanwhile, Disney has an extremely proper archive.



【Koyama】 You mean the company, Disney itself.

【Doi】 Indeed. There's also this aspect where Japan's corporate culture does not place importance on archive sections, so I want something like a national manga and anime library. I think it's a huge loss that it couldn't be realized at the time, and now we are in the COVID-19 crisis, but these kinds of facilities should become places that will naturally get a lot of visitors from overseas.

【Koyama】 I've heard that when Japanese film researchers go overseas, one projection room is prepared for each researcher. This is unthinkable in Japan. We can see the cultural differences when we examine these small details.

【Mori】 In the case of animation, especially for those in the independent industry, do they keep their data privately?

【Doi】 Yes, they do. So film itself is still not too much of a problem because a physical object remains, but there are those like the ones in the early days of digitalization, where the only things that remain have pretty terrible resolution. In contrast, it is the works from the 21st century onwards that have a higher possibility of not remaining in the future. Thinking about archives of artworks, those remain because, after all, there are physical objects there.

【Koyama】 That's right. Art remains, so it can't be thrown away.

【Mori】 Aren't there instances where people in a particular industry store all their data together?

【Doi】 There's support in the Agency for Cultural Affairs towards archiving, and New Deer also once had the works of Youji Kuri – a great master animation creator – digitalized. However, in terms of these kinds of grant money, the budget is in the framework of media art – which includes anime, so to speak, manga, video games, etc. – and they are distributed to other things as well as animation, so the amount obtained is insignificant.

【Koyama】 Would it be possible, for example, for film companies, anime companies, etc., that are prospering to bring out a large amount of money to manage or donate to the project?

【Doi】 I would say no, and it is strange that it is so. However, recently, there are cases where famous works from the past are remastered and shown once more. A while ago, I went to watch The galaxy Express 999. Those kinds of plans are carried out if they're profitable, but when it comes to taking proper care of works that are not profitable, my impression is that there aren't that many of such cases, as far as I know.

【Mori】 We can keep physical objects in the case of film, but what do we do for digital data?

【Doi】 Digital data is difficult. We don't know how long we can use QuickTime for, and it is already starting to become impossible to play flash animation, which was popular for a time. At the end of the day, the best way might be to convert it into a film print.

【Mori】 Just now, Doi-san talked about how YouTube and Vimeo are being archives in a sense, but what are people doing with the kind of data that was produced before that?

【Doi】 I don't know. It will be very difficult, since the works will be lost if the computer of the person who has the data breaks.



【Koyama】 A big difference between the field of art and the field of anime is that creation doesn't cost that much. In the creation stage, it's a state where you don't know whether it will be profitable or not, but because it doesn't cost that much, many are created. There's also the possibility that the value of the artworks of a deceased creator would multiply 30 or 40 years later. That's because there is a physical object and a market throughout the world, but what will be done with things like digital data? The field of art is viable as a job because of this kind of secondary distribution, but this part is extremely difficult in the field of animation, isn't it?

【Doi】 There are cases where, among the short animation creators, people who enter the art market attach a USB edition with the image data inside, or sell key frame pictures as artworks. I have also once worked with a Japanese gallery and sold the artworks of the late Bruce Bickford, who made the doll animations for Frank Zappa long ago.

【Koyama】 Did they sell?

【Doi】 No. But back then, I got to experience that this was what it was like to do things at the gallery. It was hard work, bringing in clay, line drawings, etc., from overseas and so on.

【Koyama】 It may be hard work, and it's nice if they sell, and even better if the prices are high, but you can't set them that high. For example, works by Matthew Barney, who is famous in the art industry, are sold for tens of millions of yen each, at a premium, by being sold in self-made boxes and the like. However, this rarely happens, and that's the difficult part. To go further, something needs to be done about it.

【Doi】 Have you handled video-related works, Koyama-san?

【Koyama】 I once handled the work of Naoyuki Tsuji-san at Kyoto. I had what he had displayed in a London gallery consigned from that gallery. I played the video at the Kyoto gallery and sold them there, but since the prices were like – for example – hundreds of thousands of yen, it's quite difficult profit-wise in that sense.

He's originally from the Image Forum, so he has really prominent elements of experimental film. In other words, appearing in screening parties and presenting your works in various places might not be satisfactory, but as an artist, that's pretty good. But if that doesn't sell, then people like us don't hold up. Although the artist will. That's why animators are fine with showing things on YouTube, but you need it to be seen by lots of people, like in a fully packed cinema, right Doi-san? Or receive grant money.

【Doi】 Among people related to images, there is, for example, a Chinese artist whom I'm connected with called Sun Xun, who comes from animation but has also been introduced at the Yokohama Triennale.

【Koyama】 He's the person whose style is like ink paintings, right? I also dealt with him once.

【Doi】 I see. In the past, when I went to Beijing, I visited his studio and tens of young staffs were working diligently. Now, he is also teaching at an art university, and you can see young people making animation taking a path that does not go down the context of film, but the context of art, having Sun Xun as their model case.

I feel that the people in China who do animation or enter art universities have high fundamental abilities to begin with. Compared to Japanese people, there are so many Chinese artists who can draw to a level that's truly amazing, so there are many people who prosper in the context of contemporary art as well. In Japan, animation is a field of film, no matter what. This is why, it's quite difficult as a market.

【Koyama】 Indeed, the only person successful in Japan is probably Tabaimo-san. By selling her works as video images, Tabaimo-san has an installation that has a system-like structure. And she's doing things like exhibitions at Hara Museum,. There are animations among them that can fetch very high prices as works of art. For example, projecting an anime onto the ceiling at Rokko Meets Art. People who have various methods to display their works are accepted as artworks, but even if we count the number of such artists globally, I think there are only around ten of them.

【Mori】 In the case of artworks, it's possible for – for example – something placed in the context of art suddenly having a high price attached at auctions, etc. but in the case of anime, are there instances where a certain creator's value suddenly increases if they go into the context of art?

【Doi】 This is recent, but you hear stories of celluloid frames of old anime being sold at high prices, but you also hear that this is something that doesn't benefit the people at work (creators).

【Mori】 That's right. In the case of anime, various video subscription services are appearing recently. Will their ways of monetization also change?

【Doi】 There was a time where such a thing was said to be possible. For example, for people making animations aimed at YouTube, the number of playbacks is everything, so there are a fair number of people who can create works that allow them to support their own lives properly. Or, with the video service known as Vimeo, which artists often register on, there was a time when it was thought that things would work out if you use a system called Vimeo On Demand, where you could sell or rent out your own creations and Vimeo will take an amount from it as a fee. However, in the end, you can now watch as many broadcasts as you want by paying a fixed fee of 1000 yen or 2000 yen, and there aren't that many people who will go out of their way to pay to watch a short film, even if it's only 100 yen. That's why currently the situation is such that only the works by those who are really famous are purchased.

【Koyama】 Can they not make a short animation section in that kind of monthly 1000 yen subscription services?

【Doi】 In that sense, animations and experimental film-like animations occasionally come up in the artistic image subscription called MUBI. Recently, there are people around me who are receiving money to create works where those kinds of artistic projects were approved on Netflix.

【Koyama】 How long are these animation works?

【Doi】 Most of them are omnibuses. For example, Netflix only shows things that are really long and because creation takes time, these individual creators can't make short works, so usually they combine the works of several people into an anthology. Recently, a part of the anime industry is seeking slightly unusual talent, and a short hamster animation called "PUI PUI Molcar" by Tomoki Misato-san, who came from Tokyo University of the Arts, became hugely popular.

Additionally, individual creators are, after all, someone who can do everything from start to finish on their own, and they can even properly do post-theory – such as "what it means to direct", etc. – so they are highly valued within the industry. Basically, the animation industry is a division of labor, and people who are active as individual artists are often promoted in the animation industry because they are valued for their ability to see the entire project. In this sense, compared to the past, it seems that if you have talent, you can do well in some kind of industry.

【Mori】 You wrote before in "Genron" that linking with the video game industry was one possible method, Doi-san.

【Doi】 Yes. Even if we are just looking at games that are short in length, there is quite a market for what are known as indie games. For example, the game I made ends in 15 minutes, but there are quite a few people who will buy it for 300 yen. Even games of similar types can possibly sell for millions of yen, so in the case of games, it is possible to obtain a reasonable amount of economic returns, in a certain sense.

【Koyama】 Those kinds of games don't cost that much to create as well, don't they? Games usually cost a lot of money, right?

【Doi】 However, it's already – as it may be supposed – becoming a red ocean, so there are cases where despite spending years making a game, only ten copies get sold. But still, video games is a field that still has dreams.

【Mori】 The work, *Ville Neuve*, handled by New Deer, can be seen on Amazon Prime and such if you pay, right?

【Doi】 People won't watch it. If I may venture to say so. (Laughs) That's why, in reality, it is not simply that people will see the films because they are uploaded to such sites, but also because of the power of publicity. In reality, we are competing with Marvel and others, so we can't compete with half-hearted advertising. And recently, the so-called "mini-theaters" are really collapsing, and fewer and fewer people are watching them. It is becoming more and more like only mainstream films are being seen.

【Mori】 Now, I would like to talk about the issue of public support. For example, you have seen the state of support in various countries, Doi-san. What was the impression you had?

【Doi】 I think France's system is really something to be envied. Japan also has public support, but mostly it only provides support for half the costs. As I mentioned earlier, short animation is in a state where, you already know the outcome before you even start working on it, and the money you'll earn won't even cover other half of the costs. With that being the case, New Deer is creating works while applying France's grant system of providing 100% support. To put it in concrete terms, you present to a French production, and if the producer says that they want to do it because it's interesting, then said producer will apply to an institution in France called the National Film Center. Meanwhile, in the French studio, if you achieve a certain level of success, there's this thing called an automatic fund, and a certain amount of money each year can also be used to make whatever you want.

【Koyama】 That’s amazing. But that’s only for talented producers, right?

【Doi】 Yes. But the threshold for the grant isn’t that high. In the case of France, there isn’t that much of a divide between cultural development and economic promotion. If the anime industry leaves things to the market, it will be difficult to beat the United States.

【Koyama】 So there is a very strong sense to protect their own culture?

【Doi】 Yes. It’s not simply just giving people money. It’s having them build up more and more skills as a producer through that money, such as “let’s do a series next” or “let’s do a longer one next”, and – if all goes well – leading to the possibility of the creation of an artistic expression that can be recognized worldwide. This is how artists gradually grow out of receiving grants.

【Koyama】 So there are also people who grow out of grants. Is this because a culture or foundation which included elements like Mœbius (a French manga creator) exists?

【Doi】 Yes. France really has established a system for art. For example, they have organized a system where a creator can join other production for three months which will be covered by the unemployment insurance paid by the producer which enable this creator to afterwards focus on his/her own project for nine months.

【Koyama】 I see. For example, if I talk in relation to art, there was a time in which artists in the Netherlands were given highly preferential support, and then hardly any good artists arose as a result.

【Doi】 That is a problem in France as well. There are indications showing that nothing is produced except for those projects aiming to receive grant money, which are works that are utterly out of alignment with the reality of the market, and things are in a state of deterioration in some sense.

【Mori】 In academic research fields as well, there are various debates about, in short, how to spread the research fees and money that comes from the state. Everyone says to “spread it out widely”.

【Doi】 Widely and deeply is the best way. In the end, it’s like, for example, the grant money provided by the Agency for Cultural Affairs – one million yen out of a budget of over three million yen in the case of short works, and you have to find a way somehow to make up the remaining two million. Instead of that, giving the entire amount to a chosen project will definitely make the industry grow and advance more. There’s the matter of responsibility of the people who are choosing which works to support, but I think that doing it properly is better.

【Koyama】 For example, in the animation festivals I asked about earlier, there are people who decide which works are to be showcased. This is where the issue of critique arises. People now say that there isn’t enough critique, but it was originally a matter of authority. It’s fine to see it with present-day sensibilities, and it’s fine to take history into account as well, and I think in the past there used to be people who held a sense of responsibility towards evaluating art in that sense. As I thought, it is critics and the power of critique that can pick up people while having proper authority. If that can be done, then countries or self-governing bodies can decide that “if this person says so, then let’s fund this”. It might be difficult, but the presence of such people determines whether there is critique. There might be a lot of critiquing there, but I also think that it is a fact that those kinds of people existed in the past.

【Doi】 I agree. I myself do critiques as well, and I am starting to acutely feel that I am clearly not needed anymore.

【Koyama】 The importance is placed on the market, and critiques are becoming unnecessary.

【Mori】 However, you work in an especially interesting way, Doi-san. You distribute and produce while also writing critiques. What do you think about the way you separate these two roles?

【Doi】 I originally created the company after doing research, critique, and criticism, so I think my critique is in every business I do. I think that the role of critique is also to properly realize something like the potential that the creator themselves have, from an angle that said creator does not notice. Meanwhile, short animation is after all an unfamiliar field, so it's difficult to enjoy without some kind of commentary. I think that the role of critique is also to properly understand those kinds of viewpoints of audiences or readers. For example, among the two thousand applications, I have my own standards when choosing the works and I work on a project with the creator who I think is trustworthy, it can also be said that it's quite biased.

That's why I do various things; because there is, in short, the aspect also of being unable to support myself with just one thing. That might also have to do with how there isn't a proper market.

【Koyama】 Out of the many anime festivals in the world, what kind of festivals are the New Chitose and Hiroshima festivals that you work on, in terms of – for example – the people making animations all over the world?

【Doi】 The New Chitose is a festival that has a very good reputation among those in the industry. There's the interesting element of the location being inside an airport, and everything can be done inside the airport. The New Chitose Airport does it with a certain type of promotional element, but they let things be done with a certain amount of freedom as well. It's often said that there is a great choice of works, so I think that a creator will be overjoyed to be selected for the festival. The Hiroshima City festival will start, and I want it to be thought of in the same way.

【Koyama】 Making that festival better really is connected to what we mentioned earlier about critique. And it's also connected to value, and the system that builds this value is, in the case of art, things like international exhibitions. Although there are issues here where it becomes "as long as the curator chooses it for us it's fine", I am also thankful if things become something like this.

【Mori】 I think the curator fulfilling almost the same kind of role as a critic can be found in the art industry as well. What I want to ask Koyama-san is this: The gallery and the critic becoming too close together is traditionally not thought of highly in the art industry, but what are your thoughts on this?

【Koyama】 Despite this, the relationship between the gallery and the critic is very close in the United States. In the case of the United States, many art museums are private, not national or public. The Museum of Modern Art, New York may have money coming from the New York state, but the private aspects of funding, such as donations, is also strong. When planning an individual exhibition of a certain artists there, the gallery's money is of course necessary. To do a large exhibition, there's a need to work with a gallery that will provide the money. In this sense, that kind of relationship is extremely difficult. However, the gallery also makes an effort to deal with good artists, and although it is difficult, this might be the authority like what I mentioned earlier. Certainly, being too close is not good, but then there are things like distribution there, and I think that makes it interesting.



【Mori】 Do you, for example, write critiques yourself, Koyama-san?

【Koyama】 No, I don't. I have met, for example, various young artists who show their works to me, but I don't give any comments. I am a businessman who deal with art, so I plan exhibitions and sell works, but I don't comment. If they say, "please look at this," I'll reply with with, "I have looked at it." And that's it. That's the extent of my critique. (Laughs)
What I mean is that I'm not a critic because there are national or public curators who do that as a job, so I think it is more appropriate to go to them.

【Doi】 In that case, what are your standards for choosing creators to take up in your gallery? It's not just simply a matter of things that can be profitable, right?

【Koyama】 A variety of elements are intertwined, and they might be completely different for each person. However, I think about what kind of works or artists would be good to place in the so-called art genre or art scene, and what kind of phenomena or trend do I want to help create, and so on. Of course, first, there is the obvious part of whether that artist has a proper sense of reality, proper technique, and is thinking seriously. While taking these into account, no matter how much I like the artist in question, if I can't see anything I can do about his works in my gallery, I tend to not choose them that much.
The same goes for overseas artists. I do think about Japan's market more or less, but I also think about how "this element is extremely weak in Japan", or things like that. There are things that a Japanese artist definitely will not have, such as the social nature which an Asian artist possesses, and I endeavor to show those kinds of things.

【Doi】 Does dealing with works of overseas artists mean dealing with just their works as units, or dealing with some sort of rights the artist has in Japan?

【Koyama】 I more or less do something like the management work of the artists in Japan.

【Mori】 I get the impression that you also have a lofty idea in a sense, of introducing to Japan creators who are not that well known, Doi-san. What do you think?

【Doi】 Honestly, for me, they are creator who should be widely known, but it's not often that the things that I have selected up or the things that I like are picked up by animation specialty magazines, etc. It pains me when the world does not agree with me that a particular creator should be widely recognized.

【Koyama】 In the field of art, even if it is a pretty big name, production process is not that different. Even for an artist whose pictures are worth one hundred million yen or two hundred million yen, the kind of things they do is the same as an artist worth a million yen. Like, just painting a canvas with paint. However, in the animation industry, just by thinking about Disney, there's a huge gap in budget.

【Doi】 In contrast, I thought art must be hard work, as it has all kinds of formats. For example, no matter the method, what my field handles in the end can be settled into the category of film, and this makes a part of me feel really constrained in a way. In comparison, I thought that the field of art has more freedom in that sense, with pictures, sculptures, installations, etc., and I thought that this freedom, conversely, might also make it difficult to evaluate artwork.



【Koyama】 Even then, I can say that fundamentally, it comes down to the individual. In the case of art, of course, the work of art itself is evaluated, but the artist themselves is also evaluated as an artist. For example, a single work painted by Van Gogh is not evaluated, but rather the portfolio of an artist who lived for about 30 years, Van Gogh, is included. That's why their worth only become recognized after their deaths. Of course, there are people who sell very well and are highly evaluated during their lifetime, but the evaluation is also based on what kind of paintings they were making before their death.

When it comes to films, too, even if you made only two films like Michael Cimino, if you've made "The Deer Hunter", then you've won.

【Doi】 There aren't that many artists who are not prolific, are there? I guess with film, there are quite a few people who make one or two in their lives, and that's it.

【Koyama】 Indeed. There are people who are not prolific in art, but even so, they draw one piece every couple of years. In terms of film creators, that's completely different to the people who make films every year in little waves. When you think about it like that, then, when it comes to artists, the artist themselves becomes the standard.

【Doi】 As I thought, running a gallery is also a way of communicating with the artist, right?

【Koyama】 Of course, it's a different story if famous works of a deceased artist arrive or something like that, but I don't mainly handle those. We mainly deal with works by existing artists, but when an artist passes away, his or her work becomes the work of a deceased artist, so the way we handle his or her work changes.

【Mori】 In your book, Koyama-san, you wrote about things like how to nurture an artist, and you mentioned that you do not criticize that much, and you support them from the shadows. Are there times where you support creators during the creating process, Doi-san?

【Doi】 Many of the creators I deal with are fundamentally people who work independently and I just leave them to do their own things, so after I hand them their budget and schedule, they're the type who keep working diligently at it. On the other hand, there are also creators who have violent ups and downs of various kinds during the creating process, so I take a certain amount of care there. However, my time is limited too, so unfortunately, there are many times where I can't stick with them so much. I listen properly to what those creators want to make, and I give the minimum amount of advice for them to make that a reality.

【Koyama】 I of course do not get involved at the creating stage, but I say things like "I want you to develop things in this direction". Among artists, there are all sorts of directions to go in, so I say things like "It would be interesting if you did things this way or that way". "I know you want to do something like this, but it might deviate from your earlier styles a little bit, do you think it will be okay?" or "You can keep on going in that way". I don't involve myself with the creating stage, but I have some sense of the direction and scale that they are working with.

Are there times where you involve yourself with the creating process, Doi-san?

【Doi】 In that sense, like – for example – in a video game project, the creator doesn't have any idea what game creation is about at all in his mind, so instead, I suggest something like "how about you try this kind of format?" and gradually elicit ideas from him by showing him that "Hey, there are these kinds of ideas out there".



【Koyama】 If so, that could surely affect the animation itself, right?

【Doi】 Yes. The field I work in traditionally has the creator often complete things on their own, so there are many parts to it that are pure, and I don't mean that in either a good sense or a bad sense. But, there are also examples where their expression becomes stronger through getting viewpoints from all sorts of people, and from later deciding to aim towards a big market, so I would like to offer them those kinds of opportunities.

For example, the creators that you deal with, Koyama-san, you mentioned earlier that a person could become a hit if they had several tens of buyers, but do you get a sense of there being a new market has been opened up somewhere?

【Koyama】 Indeed. That's why there are times where they sell a lot all at once because of publicity or some other mysterious reason, but things like that really happen due to a confluence of several factors, and there's a part where you don't know what's connected and how they're connected. I can't really say much on it, but I think even things like that are more or less because of good, steady work. Thinking about various things and applying those thoughts, like how to write the press release. I don't know if that's what a critic does. And it's a field that sees dramatic shifts when someone famous picks it up on an Internet site or something, or a celebrity buys it, or something like that.

And now, the art industry is becoming a lot more market-led. There are many artists who are really prospering, but it's a matter of how to balance it with the academic part. So, the academic part will be – to us – things like art museums.

【Mori】 When you talk about balance, do you mean balance with the gallery?

【Koyama】 I mean the art industry as a whole, but if you move in a strange way, then – as it may be supposed – things go off course. That's why the work should be looked at by academic people as well. They are very much researchers in a sense, and people who do steady work and are involved with history, so I care about the people from that field having a look. That balance is very important.

【Doi】 Since we are on this topic, what do you think about NFTs (Non Fungible Token)?

【Koyama】 NFT really is a completely different world. People who possess virtual currency purchase artworks in the normal fashion, and among those, things like Paris Hilton's painting become worthy of a hundred million yen. That's why I think that those are transactions taking place in a completely different part from the academic sector. As an example of artists who became greatly successful, Damien Hirst sold ten-thousand-pixel art pieces that were around 200,000 yen each, and they were all sold out in a flash. In that world of NFTs, 200,000 yen is not so expensive. They were all sold, and afterwards, when those pictures are resold, some part of the money goes to Damien. NFTs have that kind of system, and that's a very interesting way of usage. Just like how Duchamp's urinal functioned with a social nature because that urinal was placed in systems like art museums or the Armory Show, I think it's good to look at the NFT market and make use of it in some sort of interesting way. It's like relativizing the entire system as a whole. I think it's interesting that instead of just simply selling something because it's digital, they did it while thinking of something like that.

【Doi】 I see. So, you'll apply NFTs within the practical application of those artists?

【Koyama】 You'll be able to sell things like anime and short animations by way of NFTs, right?

【Doi】 That's something I'm thinking of as an option for subsequent development.

【Koyama】 Setting aside whether or not it would sell, it's certain that it would be sold in a proper way.

【Mori】 In the case of selling animations by way of NFTs, what would happen to broadcast rights?

【Doi】 Maybe it's because I just don't know that many examples, but creators of short animations don't often sell works themselves. They usually sell things like, a single frame of their work. In terms of creators whom I know well, there is a creator with a short piece – which is around one minute long to begin with – all in block prints that are all moved around all over the place. In that case, in the NFT market, those kinds of short works will have a really high price attached, so depending on the creator, you can say that there are people who are suited to something like that. Basically, I haven't really heard of many examples where one short work is developed through NFTs and went well. Instead, one little CG frame made by an animation creator is more popular.

【Koyama】 Like those that have turned out a little wrong. Like strange frame that was remaining in Osamu Tezuka's Mushi Productions. Something like that seems like it will sell well.

【Doi】 Certainly, like with indie games, there are people who discover a path in us like that, depending on the creator, and if these creators can set that as a base ground to continue to make the things that they like, I think that's good. On the other hand, creators of short animations market is so small and it's a matter of how to approach markets that pop up like this. Perhaps the only things I can do is to support people each time they encounter these markets. So, in terms of New Deer, it'll be great if we can keep sending more and more creators into these kinds of new markets that could become new ways out.

【Koyama】 Do you show short animations at a small theater, like showing around ten of them for example?

【Doi】 Actually, I do things like that, but it doesn't translate into money at all, to an extent that we are all in despair. Really nobody comes to watch these. In the 2000s, there was still a culture of watching short animations, with things like "Cheburashka" and Švankmajer being highly popular, but this trend disappeared in the blink of an eye. They don't want to watch it even when you put it on a broadcasting service. In the past, people watch short work compilations because you could see a variety of things, but recently, there's this trend of people not wanting to watch them because people are nervous to encounter wide variety of works or some pieces that are hard to understand. People now prefer to watch films where the outcome is predictable. People do not watch things that they don't understand.

【Koyama】 Indeed. My generation was one where you put up with seeing films that you didn't understand. But that time seems to be over now, and when I talked with Mitsuhiro Raisan of Cinema Rise a while ago, I heard that it's definitely impossible for recent generations to watch something that they don't know. With music too, you just pick up what you like and make it your own, and don't listen to it through an "album", and it's normal for there to be no regard for the order they're listened to. Like, they don't want to listen to music they don't like in the order prescribed by the album.

【Mori】 For music, etc., there are all sorts of influences in how they're made and the state of distribution, but what about animation?

【Doi】 Recently, young people are led by social media and shift towards whatever is making a buzz on the Internet, so things like film festivals aren't really entering their heads that much.

The length of the works is also really short, like just one scene or just one minute. That's why now, creator compete within a frame or duration that is easy to watch on social media.

【Koyama】 What happens if that makes a buzz?

【Doi】 The creator might get involved in corporate projects, and depending on the person, there are cases where one gets the attention of a film company to do something together, or one might be appointed for a commercial. Recently among the people who make animations, I get the feeling that they are going towards a direction of making what they themselves enjoy and what makes them feel good, rather than making their own unique ways of expression through animation. Which works out well if a lot of people who are of the same time period and are in the same timeline watch them.

【Koyama】 Are there any stories where people who were on social media, such as YouTube, are now making an amazing long anime, like what happened to, for example, Genshi Yonezu-san, whose work on YouTube made a buzz and it led to a CD being made?

【Doi】 That would surely be Makoto Shinkai. Strictly speaking, this was before social media, and he originally showed things at a small theater called Tollywood, and it was said that the theatre was fully packed.

Recently, those kinds of cases where people who normally make things on their own cooperate with major companies are starting to emerge, albeit slowly. For example, the animation department that was made in the Tokyo University of the Arts in 2009 had many artistic people to begin with, but now, there are also a lot of people who are active in the television anime field. In that sense, I feel that everything is gradually shifting towards the market.

【Mori】 Is that something you are not that happy about, Doi-san?

【Doi】 I'm happy about it in some sense. For example, among the creators I'm acquainted with, the people who might have that kind of commercial potential and people who, in the past, had a mental block towards the very idea of making a long work or a series, are able to think that they might be able to do it. On the other hand, for those who are from film companies, it will give rise to the power of imagination, like "there are cases like this" or "this kind of project might be good". However, it also becomes a matter of what's the point of doing things that are less and less profitable. I feel that the number of people who discover meaning or value in making short animation and will go through the trouble of making one is decreasing more and more.

I especially like short animations because they are not related to the market. I like the type of creators who clearly seek to create their own world view above all things, without any relation to what the audience of today will think. Nowadays, on social media or YouTube, where you can get reactions immediately, and I get the impression that there are many cases where the creator just stops there, and I feel rather sad about that. There are hardly any overwhelming instances of "Whoa, who is this person?" However, I also feel that, maybe it's becoming an environment where that isn't the goal anymore.

【Koyama】 We have to do something about establishing it as a genre.

【Doi】 Yes. Listening to you today, Koyama-san, I felt that it is indeed the case that you really place emphasis on the history that's been woven and accumulated, like the academics, and I thought that very thing is the point. In the field of animation, the history in terms of short animation was present – barely – up to the 1990s, and master creators were shared in a certain fixed context. I feel that the moment that disappears, then it would perhaps really be ruined.



【Koyama】 It'll be great if something like the National Media Art Center envisioned in the past would be realized in Japan, and if there is something like a Japanese animation authority.

In the world of art, the Venice Biennial and Documenta can be said to be authorities. Like Takashi Murakami-san says, Japan's contemporary art is said to be following in the footsteps of the United States. That's why for art, the United States is the center, and Japan is a subclass, or perhaps no more than a subclass. Certainly, in a sense, it's the world over there where value is created. The market for gutai artworks was made in the United States as well. And what created that value was the world known as the Venice Biennial or the Guggenheim Museum.

That's why it's a fact that Japan isn't the one that creates things like that. Japan is really not good at making value. In order to make value on our own, we should have with us a system or structure that has that value. I think it will be difficult for contemporary art now, but I think it might be able to be done with anime or architecture. But they don't do it.

【Doi】 That really is the case. In regard to animation as well, what makes something like that so-called authority are large animation film festivals like Annecy, or the Academy Award. There just isn't a film award for animation in Japan that gathers the world's attention. This is something embarrassing for me to say, since I work on film festivals, but unfortunately there really isn't any. In the field of film, there's the Tokyo International Film Festival, but no matter what, animation ends up playing second fiddle or even third fiddle.

Recently, a film called "Drive My Car" did pretty well in receiving various awards like the ones I mentioned, and it's currently aiming for the Academy Award, which is the highest authority. If that work was only released in Japan, it perhaps wouldn't have turned out like this. I really like that film too, and I felt that it was a film that somewhat didn't fit in with Japanese criteria or yardstick. The director, Ryusuke Hamaguchi-san, is someone who properly applied grant money, used overseas networks and thought about things on a global scale. I think success is achieved through accumulating these kinds of experiences.

【Koyama】 Quite a lot of authoritative overseas creators have entered Japan today as well, right? I think that due to the fact that Japanese anime receives recognition overseas, it has finally become something in which we have also come to realize that "we have this wonderful culture". It would not have been perceived as being so important in the past, and it wasn't thought to hold that much of a high social position as well, but it's something that's finally noticed when we hear about it from other people.

【Mori】 Thank you very much. We're out of time, and I would be grateful if we had a final comment from both of you.

【Doi】 The founding of a national art museum for animation is still not realized, so I would definitely like to see some development on that front.

【Koyama】 Yes, it would be really great if that's realized. There is already an established system in the field of art, and global connections too. Various kinds of curators are being nurtured in the field, and there is a proper history and the academic circle to go along as well. Of course there are certainly a lot of aspects which are still lacking. That is why I would like to see a proper focus on a genre that does not have a system in place. This is something we need to do now.

【Mori】 Thank you very much. And with that, we bring an end to Session 2 of the Arts Council Forum "Producing and Connoisseurship to Support Artists".
(End)

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