

February 1st, 2024

Artist's Union Japan

<http://artistsunion.jp/index.html>

Japanese Artists' Rights: THE FIRST ARTIST'S UNION IN JAPAN

In a noteworthy development for the Japanese art community, the Artists' Union Japan is pleased to announce its official establishment, representing a unique initiative in the country. Over nearly a year, the union has diligently worked to create a more connected and globally engaged art scene.

The Artists' Union Japan is a proud trade union of contemporary artists, who have come together to address the long-neglected rights of artists in Japan. We reject the notion of fuelling rivalry or radicalizing differences between our fellow professionals, instead choosing to come together in mutual support and cooperation for the betterment of the entire industry. We, as artists, recognize the importance of our contributions to society and the value of our labour. Despite this, the status of artists in Japan remains low, with many facing unfair exploitation, harassment, and precarious conditions.

We believe that by standing in solidarity and raising our voices, we can create a fair and equal working environment for all those involved in the art industry. Our vision is to cultivate a safe, productive, and thriving atmosphere while also engaging in productive discussions and dialogues with other bodies, institutions, and organizations, which can lead to the development of sustainable creative environments in the art industry at large. We remain dedicated to pursuing solutions that promote sustainability and positivity in the art industry, and we are excited to see the possibilities that our collective efforts can bring.

We are committed to challenging the status quo and ensuring that all artists have the opportunity to exercise their rights as workers, including fair compensation, written contracts, access to workers' compensation, and a safe and respectful work environment. There have been [recent public examples of censorship](#), with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government banning the screening of Yuki Iiyama's work alluding to the historical massacre of Koreans in Japan in the early 20th Century, or the case of

the [abusive exercise of curatorial power](#) of the former director at the former director at Arts Maebashi, breaching contract clauses that were fore agreed between the artist Takayuki Yamamoto and the art center.

After a year of active campaigning, we envision the Artists' Union in Japan not only as a local endeavor to safeguard our rights and professional dignity but also as a global rallying point for dialogue and collective action forming bridges with kindred organizations and fostering global collaboration in the pursuit of shared artistic ideals. As a significant step towards this goal, the organization is setting up an English-language website and contact desk, in order to forge vital connections and partnerships, both domestically and internationally, to address shared concerns in the realm of contemporary art.

For media inquiries and further information, please contact:

[**support@artistsunion.jp**](mailto:support@artistsunion.jp)

Website: <http://artistsunion.jp/index.html>