



## Europe Japan Animation Residency Launches!

Ten Artists Embark on a Journey of Cultural Exchange and Collaborative Creation

The ten participating artists were officially announced at the kickoff event. Japanese artist Baku Hashimoto remarked, "I'm looking forward to discovering what kind of work can emerge from this collaboration".

The European Union (EU) has launched the "Europe Japan Animation Residency" as part of its official program for Expo 2025 Osaka. This project embodies one of the EU's key objectives for its participation in Expo 2025 Osaka: joining hands with the host country, Japan, to strengthen the relationship with the country through culture for the future. The kickoff event on April 23 introduced the 10 participating artists (five from Japan and five from Europe). During the event, EU Commissioner-General for Expo 2025 Osaka and EU Ambassador to Japan Jean-Eric Paquet, all the participating artists, and two curators took the stage to share their excitement for cultural exchange between Japan and Europe and this project. Today marks the official start of this six-month-long residency, focused on fostering cultural exchange and international collaborative creation.



### EU Commissioner-General and EU Ambassador to Japan Paquet Shares His Thoughts on the "Europe Japan Animation Residency"

Jean-Eric Paquet, EU Ambassador to Japan, welcomed the audience with opening remarks: "I am delighted to launch such an initiative at Expo 2025 Osaka. I'm genuinely looking forward to seeing how young artists will connect across borders and create new possibilities". He introduced the Europe Japan Animation Residency and delivered a special message to the ten selected artists.

The Ambassador further expressed his enthusiasm: "It is an honor to kick off the first event of this cultural program with all of you. I look forward to witnessing the moment when Japanese anime and manga culture intersect with the diverse cultures of Europe. Art and animation also carry political significance and play a role in strengthening the ties between Japan and Europe. I hope the selected artists will contribute to that effort".

### Ten Artists as a Cultural Bridge Between Japan and Europe

The artists participating in this Residency will take inspiration from the Expo 2025 theme, "Designing Future Society for Our Lives". Through animation, a fusion of storytelling and technology, they will explore creative expressions that bridge the past and the future. At today's kickoff event, the ten artists met for the first time, introduced themselves, and presented their previous works alongside two curators, creating a lively atmosphere of exchange.

EU artist Lucija Mrzljak shared her enthusiasm: "I believe that art serves as a bridge between cultures, and I'm deeply interested in this new collaboration between Japan and the EU. I look forward to gaining new inspiration through experiencing Japanese culture". Japanese artist Baku Hashimoto also expressed his excitement: "I'm both surprised and delighted to be chosen to collaborate with artists I admire. During this residency, I look forward to discovering what kind of work can emerge from collaboration with other artists, starting from a place of no ideas".



### ■ Participating Artists

#### [EU]

Laura GONÇALVES (Portugal)



After finishing the course of Fine Arts in 2009, begins working as an animator. In 2012 she directs her first animated short film "Three Weeks in December", as part of her Masters in Animation at Arts University Bournemouth. In 2013 she moves to Porto, where she starts working in Bando à Parte, as an animator and painter. In 2016 she co-directs with Alexandra Ramires "Drop By Drop", and in 2022 she premieres her solo short film "The Garbage Man" and in 2024 together with Alexandra Ramires, co-directs "Percebes" at the BAP – Animation Studio, a Cooperative production studio, of which she is one of the founding members.

#### Edmunds JANSONS (Latvia)



Edmunds Jansons is a Latvian-born director, animator, creative producer, book illustrator, and founder of animation film studio Atom Art. His filmography includes animated short and feature films in different genres, which have been awarded in various significant festivals. Besides, Edmunds teaches animation directing at the Academy of Arts of Latvia. Among his most notable works are *Choir Tour* (2012), *Guard of Honour* (2021), and *Freeride in C* (2024).

#### Sander JOON (Estonia)



Sander Joon, an Estonian film director, is known for award-winning animations *Velodrool*, *Moulinet*, *Sounds Good*, and the Oscars-shortlisted *Sierra* (2022). He also taught animation at the Estonian Academy of Arts. In 2023, the Estonian president honored him with the Young Cultural Figure Award for his contributions to Estonian culture.

#### Noémie MARSILY (Belgium)



Noémie Marsily was born in 1983 in Belgium and since then, she engraves, paints, draws images that move most of the time. After studying illustration at St-Luc Brussels, she published several comics and graphic novels including *Fétiche* (2013), *Memet* (2019) and *Mori* (2024). In parallel, she has directed several animated shorts in duo with Carl Roosens, including *Poodle* (2010), *Around the Lake* (2013), *Mosquito* (2014) and *I don't feel anything anymore* (2016). Her last solo shortfilm *Whatever moves is alive* (2022), is an intimate and poetic self-portrait.

#### Lucija MRZLJAK (Croatia)

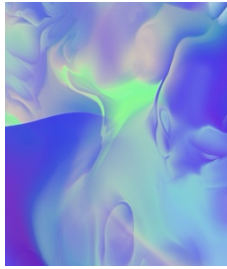


Lucija Mrzljak is a Croatian animation film director based in Estonia. Currently she is teaching at the Estonian Academy of Fine Arts and pursuing a degree in Audiovisual Composition at the Music and Theatre Academy in Tallinn. Since 2016, Lucija has directed several acclaimed animated short films, produced at the Eesti Joonisfilm studio in Tallinn and the Adriatic Animation studio in Zagreb. The film *Eeva* (2022) premiered at the Berlinale 2023. Notably, it was shortlisted for the 2024 Academy Awards and received the Emile Award. Lucija directed music videos for renowned musicians such as Glen Hansard and Mari Kalkun. Lucija is also a passionate illustration artist, she has published several children's books and created posters for various film festivals.



## [Japan]

Baku HASHIMOTO



Baku Hashimoto is a film director and animation artist who works independently across a wide range of mediums—from generative art and motion graphics to stop-motion animation and interactive design. Influenced by experimental film and hacker culture, he explores new ways of creating through both visual experimentation and technical innovation. By continually researching tool development and diverse modes of expression, he pursues a variety of styles within the visual arts.

Masa KUDO



Masa Kudo is an animation filmmaker born in Chitose, Hokkaido. Her work often explores themes of time, space, and memory. She creates animations using classical techniques such as 8mm film, cyanotype, and hand-drawn animation, crafting each frame individually through drawing or filming.

Sumito SAKAKIBARA



Born in Hokkaido in 1980. Left Japan at the age of 15, he graduated from The Royal College of Art in the UK and currently lives on the foothill of Mt. Iizuna in Nagano prefecture Japan.

Shinobu SOEJIMA



Shinobu Soejima defines animation as "the power to bring back from death to life", and try to create a vision of a possible spiritual dimension. In this way, she has been researching stop-motion animation expressions by using puppets and organic materials that decay over time, such as meat, grains, insects, and so on. She is inspired by the tension between the visible and the invisible. Or the physical and the metaphysical. She won several awards at domestic and international film festivals, including the 68th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen Special Mention by Ecumenical Jury, the 22nd Japan Media Art Festival – Jury's prize

Honami YANO



Honami Yano is an animation artist and filmmaker born on a small island in the Seto Inland Sea of Japan. Her film Honekami—A Bite of Bone (2021), set on her home island, won the Grand Prize for Short Animation at the 45th Ottawa International Animation Festival, along with numerous other awards at film festivals worldwide.

## ■ Curators

Clémence BRAGARD (France)



Clémence is a freelance film programmer, curator and mentor specialised in animation. She graduated in audiovisual and digital footage preservation at INA, then in production management at Gobelins. She has developed her expertise by collaborating with major French companies and institutions such as TeamTO, La Cabane, Canal+, France TV, CNC, Cesar. She also contributed to various international events including Annecy Festival, OIAF, FMX, The Animation Workshop, CEE animation workshop and Cartoon Media.

Koyo YAMASHITA



Born in Tokyo. Has been festival director of Image Forum Festival since 2001. Programmer of Theater Image Forum in Shibuya, Tokyo since 2005. Has been guest programmer/curator for many film and media art festivals and film events in and outside Japan. Advisor for collection of film and video for Asian Culture Center in Kwangju, Korea. Has served as jury for many international film/art festivals such as Hong Kong International Film Festival, Cannes Director's Fortnight, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Tampere International Film Festival and Minikino Film Week Bali International Film Festival etc.

## ■ Overview of the Europe Japan Animation Residency

Under the theme "Building Cultural Bridges through Animation Art," the Europe Japan Animation Residency is a six-month collaborative creation and cultural exchange initiative that brings together ten artists from Japan and Europe. This international artist residency is organized by the European External Action Service (the EU's foreign ministry) and the EU-funded project "Cultural Relations Platform," in collaboration with Image Forum (Tokyo) and with the support of the City of Kyoto.

The program reinterprets Kansai's rich traditional performing arts, such as Bunraku, Rōkyoku, Kawachi Ondo, and Shōmyō, through a contemporary lens, creating artworks that embody the spirit of intercultural dialogue. The project unfolds in three phases. In the first phase, the artists will stay in the Kansai region from April 23 and will participate in the Europe Day event on May 9. In June, the project enters its second phase, with collaborative online creation support in preparation for a presentation at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France. The final phase will take place in October, when artists will come together again to engage in cultural exchange and collaboration through art, both in Japan and Europe.

Project Name: Europe Japan Animation Residency

Period: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 – October 2025

## ■ Overview of the EU Pavilion

Under the theme “Nurturing Tomorrow,” the EU Pavilion sparks intellectual curiosity by exploring topics such as the value of diversity in building sustainable, inclusive, and cohesive societies, which the EU is striving for, as well as the possibilities offered by new science, technology, and innovation. The pavilion’s exterior and interior design are inspired by the three guiding principles of the New European Bauhaus: sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion.



Name: European Union (EU) Pavilion

Period: Sunday, April 13, 2025 – Monday, October 13, 2025

Location: Saving Zone S07

Official Website: [https://eu-at-world-expos.europa.eu/index\\_ja](https://eu-at-world-expos.europa.eu/index_ja)

Official Social Media:

•Instagram : [@euinjapan](https://www.instagram.com/euinjapan)

•X : [@EUinJapan](https://twitter.com/EUinJapan)

•Facebook : [@Delegation of the European Union to Japan](https://www.facebook.com/DelegationoftheEuropeanUniontoJapan)

## ■ Official Photos

Please download and use the official photos from the link below.

<https://x.gd/C0jdL>

### «Contact Information for Media Inquiries»

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