

Forest Art Festival (FAF) in Ladakh 2026 Proposal

The Wall Art Project launched the *Forest Art Festival (FAF)* in 2023 in Ladakh, northern India, by planting 6,100 willow and other saplings together with local communities, such as Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh and Matho Monastery. These trees, once grown, will be used as building materials. FAF is an art festival that begins with the action of planting trees.

In Ladakh—where the impacts of global warming are keenly felt through glacial melt and increased tree planting efforts have become an essential countermeasure. FAF aims to use art as a medium to accompany and witness the long-term growth of these planted trees until they eventually form a forest.

In 2024, sculptor **Atsushi Tomatsu** created driftwood sculptures for the plantation site, and **Yusuke Asai** produced three large-scale earth drawings encircling the area.

(<https://youtu.be/RqR8e9GE3-I?si=LZa3QSKO6u5ODKtU>)



For this third edition of the project, we will continue the work initiated in 2023 by inviting artists from Japan and Ladakh. During a stay of a little over two weeks, they will conduct workshops for local children and restore the existing earth drawings, and create new artworks. The completed works will be exhibited alongside twelve pieces produced in 2017, 2023, and 2024. We aim expanding the circle of people connected to the festival.

The festival is co-organized with the **Ladakh Arts and Media Organization (LAMO)**—an institution that has promoted cultural preservation and contemporary art in Ladakh for over 30 years. Through this collaboration, we aim to widely share the messages and works of Japanese artists and deepen exchanges among artists of Ladakh across regions.

Event Dates: May 25 – June 7, 2026

Venue: Matho Village, LAMO (Ladakh Arts and Media Organization), Ladakh, India

Organizer: WALL ART PROJECT (Nonprofit Organization)

Co-organizers: Ladakh Arts and Media Organization (LAMO)

Sponsors: Kai Corporation / Polar Star Co., Ltd. / Blue Bear Co., Ltd. / Tsomoriri Bunko and others

Invited Artist

Atsushi Tomatsu (Sculptor)

In 2024, Tomatsu created the driftwood yak sculpture “*The Guiding Forest*” using driftwood found in Matho Village, Ladakh. The work still stands at the center of the plantation site, watching over the growing trees and captivating visitors. For this edition of FAF, with the cooperation of the local public school, he will conduct a workshop for children. Using driftwood collected from the river that flows through the village, all participants will work together to create a single living creature. Once completed, the sculpture will be installed at the plantation site, becoming—like the yak—another guardian watching over the forest—to-be.



Profile

Born in 1985 in Wakayama Prefecture. Sculptor. Completed the Graduate Program in Fine Arts at Tokyo Zokei University. His practice centers on wooden figurative sculptures. In 2016, he moved his studio to Ishinomaki, Miyagi. Drawn to the forms of driftwood washed ashore on the beaches of the Oshika Peninsula, he began creating works using driftwood.

Selected Solo & Group Exhibitions

- 2025 Atsushi Tomatsu Solo Exhibition “Forest Gaze” (Tsomoriri Bunko / Tokyo)
- 2025 Baggat Art Exhibition 2025 (South Korea)
- 2024 Atsushi Tomatsu Solo Exhibition “*The Day of Returning to the Forest*” (Tsomoriri Bunko / Tokyo)
- 2023 Atsushi Tomatsu Solo Exhibition “*Shapes that Recall*” (GALVANIZE Gallery / Miyagi)
- 2021 Atsushi Tomatsu Solo Exhibition “*Memories and Forms of Drifting Presences*” (GALVANIZE Gallery / Miyagi)

Art Festivals

- 2025 Akune Umimachi Art Festival (Kagoshima)
- 2024 Forest Art Festival in Ladakh 2024 (Ladakh, India)
- 2023 Shinano Primitive Sense Art Festival 2023 — *Drops of the Mountain, Ripples of Water* (Lake Kizaki / Nagano)
- 2022 5th Kagawa Yamanami Art Festival 2022 (Ayagawa / Kagawa)
- 2019 Reborn-Art Festival 2019 (Kiwamari-so, Ishinomaki / Miyagi)
- 2017 Reborn-Art Festival 2017 (Ogihama Elementary School / Miyagi)

Yusuke Asai and the Earth-Drawing Production Team (Artist)

The 280-meter earth drawing created in 2024 as a guardian of the plantation site is made by applying limewater used locally to paint prayer chortens onto sun dried bricks commonly used as building material in the region. As with chortens, which are repainted once a year, the earth drawing gradually loses its color as it weathers under wind and snow. Loved by the local community, the earth drawing is restored every two years through the hands of the people. During this edition of FAF, under Asai's guidance, a fabric-painting workshop will also be held. Using local soil, participants will create fabric earth drawings, expand the existing work and bringing forth new forms.



↑ Workshop scene
Creating Earth Drawings
with Soil Pigments

Land Art “The Constellations of the Earth Messenger of the Earth King”

Profile

Born in 1981 in Tokyo. Asai creates works in any environment, adapting to local conditions by using soil and water collected from each site for his “mud paintings” depicting animals and plants. He also produces works such as “*Plants That Became Road Lines*,” in which he cuts out flora and fauna shapes from sheets of white-line material used on asphalt roads and burns them into place with a torch. His practice unfolds freely, responding to the materials and conditions of each location. He has been active internationally, including at the “Wall Art Festival” held in schools across India, as well as in the United States, Finland, China, and many other countries.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

Yusuke Asai: Children of Stardust (Kanazu Forest of Creation Museum, 2024)

Yokohama Museum of Art – Special Exhibition of Newly Acquired Works: Yusuke Asai, “Into the Eight-Million Forest” (Yokohama Museum of Art, 2024)

Yusuke Asai – Seeds of Painting, Journeys of Earth (Hakone Open-Air Museum, 2015–2016)

Selected Group Exhibitions

Accumulated Time: Depicting This World (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 2025)

30th Anniversary MOT Collection: Nine Profiles 1935→2025 (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2025)

Challenging Taro Okamoto: Yusuke Asai & Milan Fukuda (Taro Okamoto Museum of Art, Kawasaki, 2024)

A Spirit of Gift, A Place of Sharing (Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts, 2022)

Arts in Qiaoshan – Guangdong Nanhai Earth Art Festival (Pingsha Island, Guangdong, 2022)

In 2019, Asai received the **Yokohama Cultural Award, Culture & Arts Encouragement Prize**.

Chihaya Oguri (Manga Artist)

Manga artist Chihaya Oguri, who created the mural “*Wild Rose*” in 2017 together with children from the Matho Village area, remains an artist vividly remembered by many villagers. This year, he will return to the same school and, while chatting with the children, create a live painting in another classroom. His signature cosmic imagination will unfold across the walls as he works.

The mural will embody the thoughts and dreams of many children—just as the planted saplings grow into forests and expand outward. Through this new collaborative mural, FAF will further evolve into a more interactive and participatory art project.



↑ The mural created during the public live-painting session. Drawn improvisationally without preliminary sketches, expanding and proliferating across the wall.

Profile

Born in 1992. Manga artist and illustrator. Debuted in 2014 on *Shonen Sunday Web*. In 2021, he received the Encouragement Prize in the *Monthly Comic Bunch* manga award organized by Shinchosha. Known for his meticulous, hand-drawn style, Oguri has recently expanded beyond the conventional framework of manga, creating improvised murals and live-paintings that unfold his unique imaginative worlds.

His works include *Super Sekai-jin* (Volumes 1–3), the Gaza-support manga *A Story of the Tail I Left in That Town*, *Mistaken Freedom*, and *Rural Community Ecstasy*.

Selected Exhibitions

2025 Solo Exhibition *Super Sekai-jin* (Tsomoriri Bunko / Tokyo)

2024 Two-person Exhibition *Another World Stroll* (Tsomoriri Bunko / Tokyo)

Chieko Hanada (Dancer)

In the 2024 edition of FAF, despite the high altitude of 3,800 meters, dancer Chieko Hanada performed at the plantation site. Her choreography, incorporating traditional Ladakhi movements, left a deep impression on the local community. She also held a dance workshop at the Matho school, connecting with the students there. For this year's festival, she will begin by creating choreography together with the children she grew familiar with during her previous visit. On the day of FAF, she will present a group performance in collaboration with Yusuke Asai's earth drawings.

Profile

Born in Kitakyushu. Studied modern ballet under Akiko Kuroda from the age of 6 to 18. Received the Minister of Education Award at the 4th Kitakyushu & Asia National Western Dance Competition. During her student years, she learned the *janggu* (Korean hourglass drum) and traditional Korean dance with the Korean/Chosŏn traditional performing arts group NOLIBANG (Nagoya). She later studied minority ethnic dances at Yunnan Arts University. After returning to Japan, she began performing in contemporary dance and theater works.

Major Performances

- 2003 NOLIBANG "From the Sacred Earth" (Nagoya)
- 2004 NOLIBANG "Chikusa Norimadan" (Nagoya) – Production & Performance
"From the Sacred Earth" (Seoul) – Production & Performance
- 2007 *How to Make a Labyrinth* (Choreography/Direction: Jun Takahashi, junjunsience)
Dance Lab 2007, Kitakyushu Performing Arts Center
- 2008 *Shii / Marebito Ebisu – The Story of the Murasakigawa River* (Guest Performer)
Mizukawa Water Stage
- 2009 horamiri "Desert of the Moon" (Guest Performer)
- 2010 Joined *horamiri*, a contemporary dance company in Kitakyushu, and began creating choreographic works
<http://t-etc.net/horamiri.htm>
- 2011 Presented work at Session House Theater 21fes vol.85
- 2019 Appeared in the music video for Giant Panda, included in yojik & wanda's *Night Rain*
<https://youtu.be/yZNNqFFsWE>
October: Solo performance "SOUP" at Cafe Muriwui
- 2021 March: Solo performance "Sand Poem" at Cafe Muriwui
August: Performed at the closing event of the exhibition *Tsukimigusa* at Tsomoriri Bunko

Reference Video

Forest Art Festival 2024

From the performance at the plantation site



Sakiko Ando (Musician)

Sakiko Ando, who lives on Shishijima—an island in the Seto Inland Sea with a population of just 15—created the animation *“Crossing the Boundaries”* together with painter Saki Machida, with whom she shared daily life on the island. Through the screening of this work, as well as through live painting, music, and other artistic actions, they cross the boundaries between animals and humans, and between life and death—reminding us that we, too, are living creatures and will one day return to the earth.

This perspective offers one possible response to the extreme weather and human divisions we face today, and embodies the core philosophy of FAF, which began with the act of planting trees.

In addition, there will be an exhibition of original drawings from *“The Picture Book of Death,”* a collaborative project led by Ando involving eight artists. (Details p.9)

Sakiko Ando

Lives on Shishijima in the Seto Inland Sea. A singer.
Has collaborated in numerous performance projects with visual artists, including Yusuke Asai (Kanazu Forest of Creation Museum, 2024), Chiharu Mizukawa (Hajimari Art Center, 2024), and others.

A selection from the animated film to be screened



Live Performance Footage

Tsering Youdol, Chemat Dorjey, Jamyang Namgail and other Ladakhi Artists

Tsering Youdol

Born in 1996 in Matho village. She grew up watching her father paint from an early age.

“When people talk about Ladakh, they often mention the beautiful landscapes, Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, and clear skies but for me, it’s the warmth and compassion of the people that truly make Ladakh special,” she says.

Working primarily with watercolor and handmade paper, she paints portraits of the people of Ladakh. She has visited nomadic communities, captivated by their way of life, and has created many portraits of them as well.

She also explores experimental art using natural pigments derived from plants and minerals.

Chemat Dorjey

Born in 1989 in Sakti Village.

Since student days, the artist has received numerous awards and is recognized as part of the first generation of contemporary artists in Ladakh. Expanding the field of sculpture, they express the beauty inherent in Ladakh’s history, heritage, and culture using diverse materials such as metal, thread, papier-mâché, and pigments—creating a unique artistic world. In 2017, they established Spindle Art Studio & Gallery in the old town of Leh.

Jamyang Namgail

Born in 1995, into a nomadic family on the Changthang Plateau of Ladakh—his birth took place inside a yak-hair tent.

Drawing inspiration from the high-altitude natural environment (around 4,000 meters) and rich Buddhist culture in which nomads live, his work features essential handmade items from nomadic life—such as woolen textiles, yak-hair tents, intricate handicrafts, and musical instruments. His life’s work is to convey the intimate and harmonious relationship between nomads and nature.

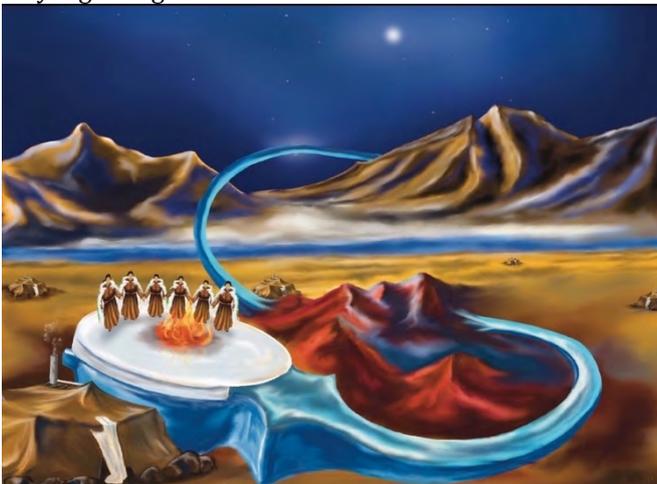
Tsering Youdol



Chemat Dorjey



Jamyang Namgail



Hanae Uchida (Documentary Filmmaker)

Documentary filmmaker Hanae Uchida approaches contemporary realities through her own distinct perspective. Drawn to FAF, she continues to engage with the project not merely as a recorder of events but through a unique lens shaped by environmental and social issues. After completing the 2024 documentary film, she continued her involvement by following the activities and expressions of Ladakhi artists who visited Japan in 2025 for the exhibition “*Ladakh Nomads’ Vision*.” She is now deeply committed to filming and producing the next installment of the FAF documentary for this year.

Profile

Born in Tokyo in 1981. After studying multimedia arts—including film, photography, design, and web—at a vocational school, she moved to the United States in 2002. At the Art Institute of California – Los Angeles, she continued her studies in film and photography while participating in film and video production.

Upon returning to Japan, she joined a production company and worked on a wide range of projects, from feature films and documentaries to music videos, TV commercials, corporate videos, archival footage, live-performance DVDs, and DVD bonus features. She also handled foreign film acquisitions and Japanese–English translation for film planning and scripts. After five years, she became independent in 2011.

Her major works include the “*Sekai wa Nunoshigi – Stories of Cloth*” documentary series (later adapted into a WOWOW program); the feature-length documentary “*A Journey to Live Tomorrow*” (winner of the SKIP City Award and selected at multiple film festivals); “*Children’s Philosophy – A Da-Ko-Da Time*”; and the short film “*Living Happily Even with a Motionless Body*.”

Awards

Yahoo! News **Best Expert 2024** – Grand Prize, Documentary Division (Japan)

Around Films International Film Festival – **Best Documentary** (France)

Forest Art Festival 2024 Documentary Film



Artwork Exhibited at LAMO (Ladakh Arts and Media Organization)

Yusuke Asai, “Mural” (2017)

Created through a workshop with 20 participants, including local artists.



Death is...
the center of the universe
a prayer
silent and deep
prayer



“Picture Book of Death” Exhibition

The exhibition “Picture Book of Death” is a spin-off exhibition under the Forest Art Festival in Ladakh 2026.

“Picture Book of Death” was created by Sakiko Ando in July 2025, and she called eight artists to collaborate under this theme. In this exhibition, Original artworks (drawing or painting) of each artist for the “Picture Book of Death” will be showcased which is responding to words expressing Ando’s view of life and death.

And an animation “Crossing the Boundaries,” created by Sakiko and Saki Machida unit, will also be screened. In addition, during the exhibition period, manga artist Chihaya Oguri will also present a live painting based on the text from “Picture Book of Death”.

Participating Artists – Picture Book of Death

Yusuke Asai, Maki Okojima, Daisuke Kagawa, Kotakeman, Sakurako Hamaguchi, Saki Machida, Chiharu Mizukawa, Vayed Brothers

Expecting Date: 30th May 2026 – 7th June 2026 (Install on 29th May, Move out on 9th June)

Participating Artists (8 artists)

Yusuke Asai <https://www.instagram.com/asaiyusuke33/>

Maki Okojima https://www.instagram.com/maki_ohkojima/

Daisuke Kagawa https://www.instagram.com/daisukekagawa_official/

Kotakeman <https://www.instagram.com/kotake.man/>

Sakurako Hamaguchi <https://www.instagram.com/sakurakohamaguchi.ee/>

Saki Machida https://www.instagram.com/machida_saki/

Chiharu Mizukawa https://www.instagram.com/mizukawachiharu_art/

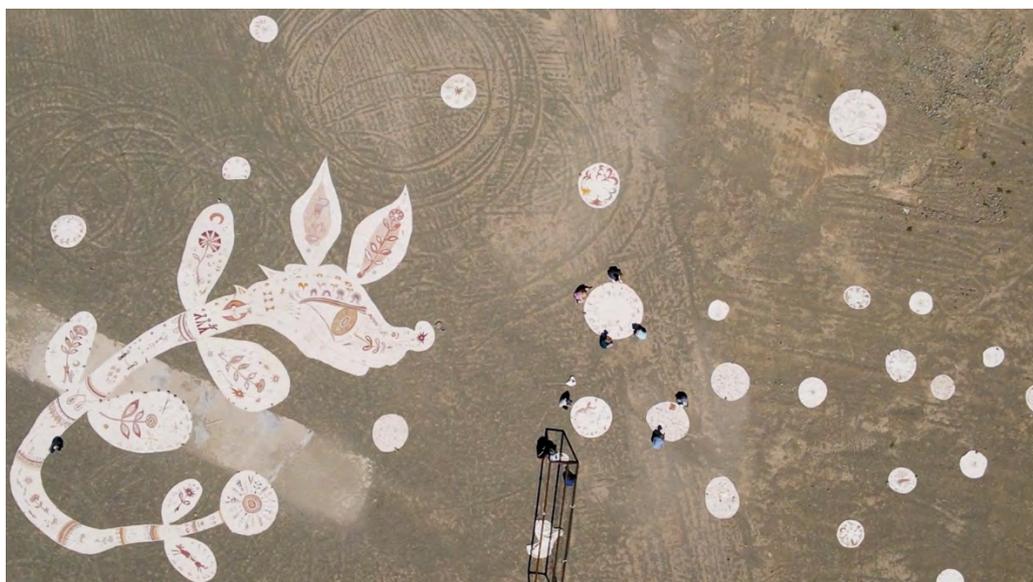
Vayed Brothers https://www.instagram.com/vayed_brothers/

Works Exhibited in Matho Village

Yusuke Asai, "Earth Constellation: Messenger of the Wind King" FAF2024



Yusuke Asai, "Earth Constellation: Messenger of the Soil King" FAF2024



Yusuke Asai, "Earth Constellation: Messenger of the Water King" FAF2024



Atsushi Tomatsu, *"The Guiding Forest"* FAF2024



Atsushi Tomatsu, *"The Gazing Mountain"*



Daisuke Kagawa, "Returning Here Again" FAF2023



Daisuke Kagawa, "Volume of People" — FAF 2024, 4-meter Emaki Scroll



Vayeda brothers *"Little Things"* FAF2024



Vayeda brothers *"Spring of Ancestors"* Earth Art Project 2017



Anpu Varkey "SKYWARD" Earth Art Project 2017



Chihaya Oguri "Wild Rose" Earth Art Project 2017

