

Nakamura Keith Haring Collection

1. Overview

The Nakamura Keith Haring Collection is the world's only museum dedicated exclusively to the life, work, and social legacy of Keith Haring. Founded in 2007 in Kobuchizawa, Yamanashi, Japan, the museum operates as a cultural platform where art, education, and social engagement meet.

The Collection is also widely recognized as Japan's only museum that places LGBTQ+ history, visibility, and advocacy at the core of its mission. Grounded in Keith Haring's identity and activism, the museum addresses themes that remain urgent today, including HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ+ rights, children's well-being, and environmental sustainability.

With approximately 300 artworks and more than 500 archival materials, the Collection functions as a living space for ideas. Its exhibitions, education programs, and public initiatives are designed to be accessible, participatory, and socially relevant, reflecting Haring's belief that art should exist in everyday life.



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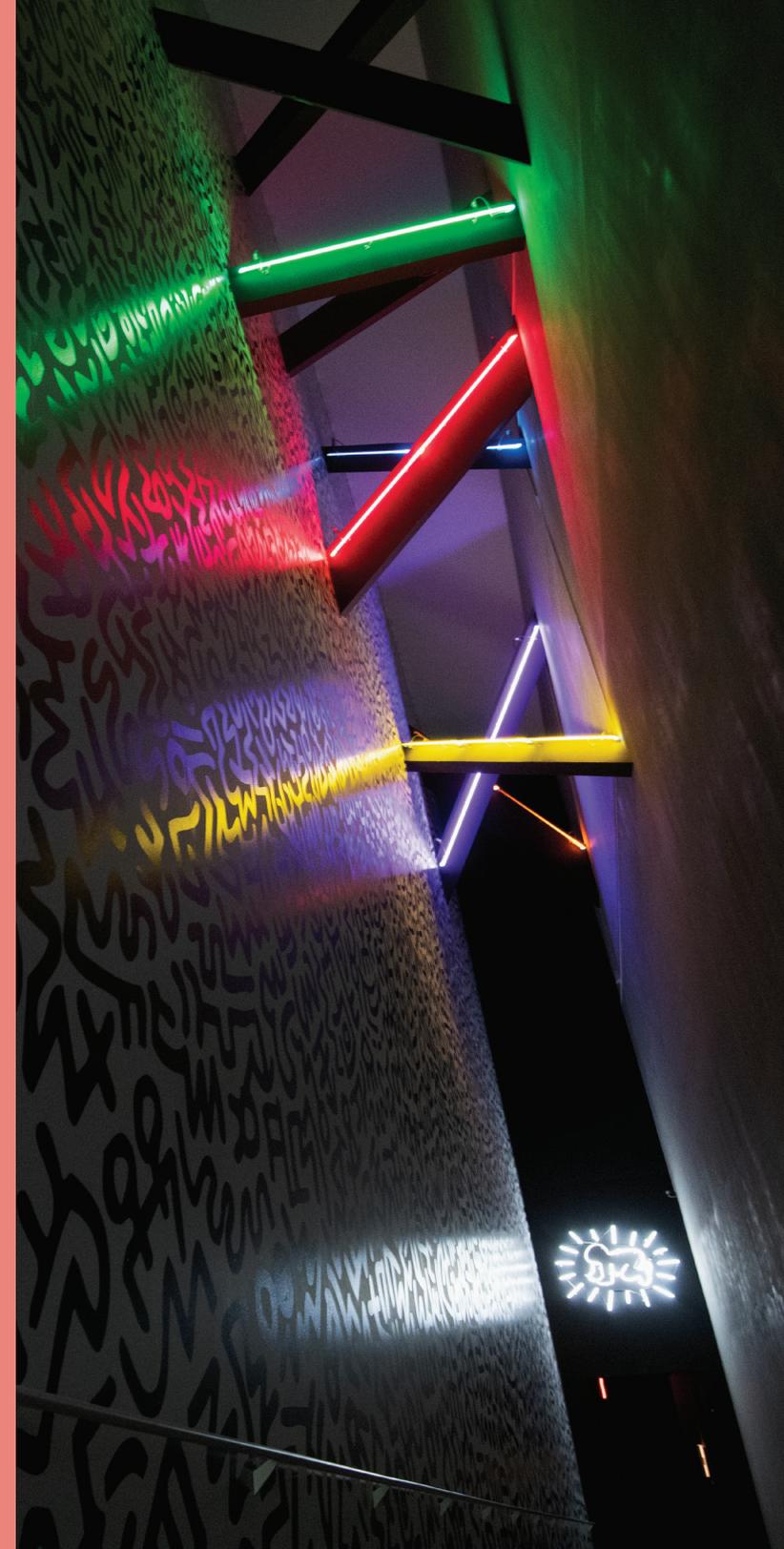
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2. Mission

The Nakamura Keith Haring Collection exists to keep Keith Haring's work and convictions active in the world. The museum preserves and presents his art while carrying forward his belief that art should speak directly to people and respond to what is happening around us.

Grounded in accessibility and social responsibility, the Collection uses art to encourage conversation, awareness, and reflection. Rather than treating Haring's work as fixed history, the museum approaches it as something that continues to ask questions and invite participation.



3. About the Museum

Located at the southern foothills of the Yatsugatake Mountains, the Nakamura Keith Haring Collection was founded by collector and entrepreneur Kazuo Nakamura. From the beginning, the museum was envisioned not as a formal institution, but as a place where Haring's way of working, open, public-facing, and socially engaged, could continue.

The quiet natural setting offers a contrast to the urban environments that shaped Haring's practice, creating space for visitors to slow down and engage with his work. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and public projects, the museum addresses social questions that were central to Haring's life and remain relevant today.



4. History

2007: Museum opens with the inaugural exhibition KEYFOREST 871228: The World of Keith Haring - From Chaos to Belief in Dreams.

2009: Launch of the International Children's Drawing Contest; recognized by Hokuto City for its educational contribution.

2012: Introduction of the Curator's Selection exhibition series.

2015: Major expansion and renovation, including the Freedom Gallery and outdoor courtyard.

2017: 10th anniversary exhibition Keith Haring and Japan: Pop to Neo-Japonisme.

2021: Launch of the museum's official YouTube channel.

2022: 15th anniversary exhibition Chaos and Hope.



5. Keith Haring (1958-1990)

Keith Haring emerged in early 1980s New York as one of the most influential artists of his generation. His chalk drawings on unused advertising panels in New York City subway stations turned everyday commuting spaces into places of direct communication, making art immediately accessible to a broad audience.

Haring's practice extended beyond traditional media to include murals, posters, workshops, performances, and the Pop Shop, an experiment in dissolving the boundary between art and daily life. After being diagnosed with AIDS in 1988, Haring intensified his activism, using his work to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS until his death in 1990 at the age of 31. His foundation was established to continue this mission.



6. Collection

The Nakamura Keith Haring Collection brings together artworks, archival materials, and related collections that reflect both Keith Haring's artistic practice and the broader cultural environment in which he worked. Rather than presenting works as isolated objects, the museum approaches its collections as interconnected narratives shaped by people, communities, and social movements.

Keith Haring Collection

At the core of the museum is the Keith Haring Collection, which includes approximately 300 works—paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures—alongside more than 500 archival materials such as photographs, videos, posters, and Pop Shop merchandise. Together, these materials trace Haring's development as an artist and communicator, as well as his commitment to using art as a public language that could circulate beyond traditional institutions.

The collection reflects the range of Haring's practice, from works rooted in the street and everyday life to pieces that directly address social issues such as HIV/AIDS, inequality, and collective responsibility. Seen as a whole, it offers insight into how Haring's visual vocabulary evolved while remaining grounded in accessibility and directness.



Patricia Field Art Collection

Complementing the Keith Haring Collection is the Patricia Field Art Collection, acquired in 2017 following the closure of Field's legendary New York boutique. Patricia Field is one of the most influential stylists and costume designers of the past five decades, best known for her work on film and television projects that reshaped the relationship between fashion, identity, and popular culture. Her costume design for *Sex and the City* earned her a Primetime Emmy Award and multiple Emmy nominations, and she received an Academy Award nomination for *The Devil Wears Prada*.

Field's boutiques, which moved across locations in Downtown New York from the late 1960s onward, functioned as cultural spaces rather than conventional retail stores. Their walls were lined with artworks collected over decades—many of them gifts from friends, artists, collaborators, fans, and staff members. These works traveled with the boutiques as they relocated, accumulating layers of history tied to different eras of Downtown New York.

Although museum founder Kazuo Nakamura never met Keith Haring personally, his engagement with Haring's work led to a long-standing friendship with Field. When her boutique closed in 2017, the Nakamura Keith Haring Collection acquired a significant group of the artworks that had defined those spaces. The collection includes works connected to artists and cultural figures who moved through Field's world, including Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, both of whom were part of the creative communities that shaped and sustained her boutiques.

Many of these works reflect the realities and expressions of queer culture cultivated in Downtown New York, offering a record of lived experience, chosen family, and creative exchange. Within the museum, the Patricia Field Art Collection situates Haring's work within a wider network of artists, designers, and cultural producers, expanding the narrative from a single artist to the ecosystem that surrounded and supported him.



7. Architecture

The museum was designed by architect Atsushi Kitagawara around the theme “From Darkness to Hope.” Rather than presenting a monumental building, the architecture follows the natural slope of the site and unfolds gradually as visitors move through it.

Galleries shift from enclosed, darker spaces to open, light-filled rooms, echoing the energy and urgency of Haring’s work and the social climate of 1980s New York. An expansion in 2015 added the Freedom Gallery and outdoor spaces, strengthening the connection between art, architecture, and the surrounding landscape.



8. Museum Shop and Public Outreach

Inspired by Keith Haring's Pop Shop, the museum shop is treated as part of the museum's cultural activity rather than a separate retail space. Alongside historical merchandise and contemporary collaborations, the shop introduces visitors to organizations and initiatives connected to issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, HIV/AIDS, sustainability, mental health, and human rights.

Through its online shop and pop-up projects across Japan, the museum reaches audiences who may never visit Kobuchizawa, extending Haring's belief that art should circulate freely and meet people where they are.



9. Research, Exhibitions, and Social Engagement

Research is the foundation of the Nakamura Keith Haring Collection's public programs. The museum approaches Keith Haring's work not only as an artistic legacy to be preserved, but as a body of material that continues to generate new questions, interpretations, and forms of engagement.

Long-term research initiatives inform the museum's exhibitions, publications, and public programs. These research processes often extend beyond the museum itself, connecting historical inquiry with contemporary social contexts. A recent example includes the museum's ongoing research into Haring's 1988 visit to Hiroshima, which led to exhibitions, public talks, and participatory workshops with children and local communities.

This research-driven approach allows the museum to move fluidly from archival study to exhibition-making and into public-facing activities such as workshops, educational programs, and community events. Rather than treating exhibitions and education as separate functions, the Collection views them as interconnected stages in a single process that links research, artistic practice, and lived experience.



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10. Environmental Outreach

Environmental sustainability is addressed through education and public communication rather than abstract messaging. Through its official YouTube channel and digital programming, the museum produces accessible content that introduces sustainability-related topics in clear and relatable ways, particularly for younger and international audiences.

These initiatives reflect the museum's broader commitment to social responsibility and long-term impact.

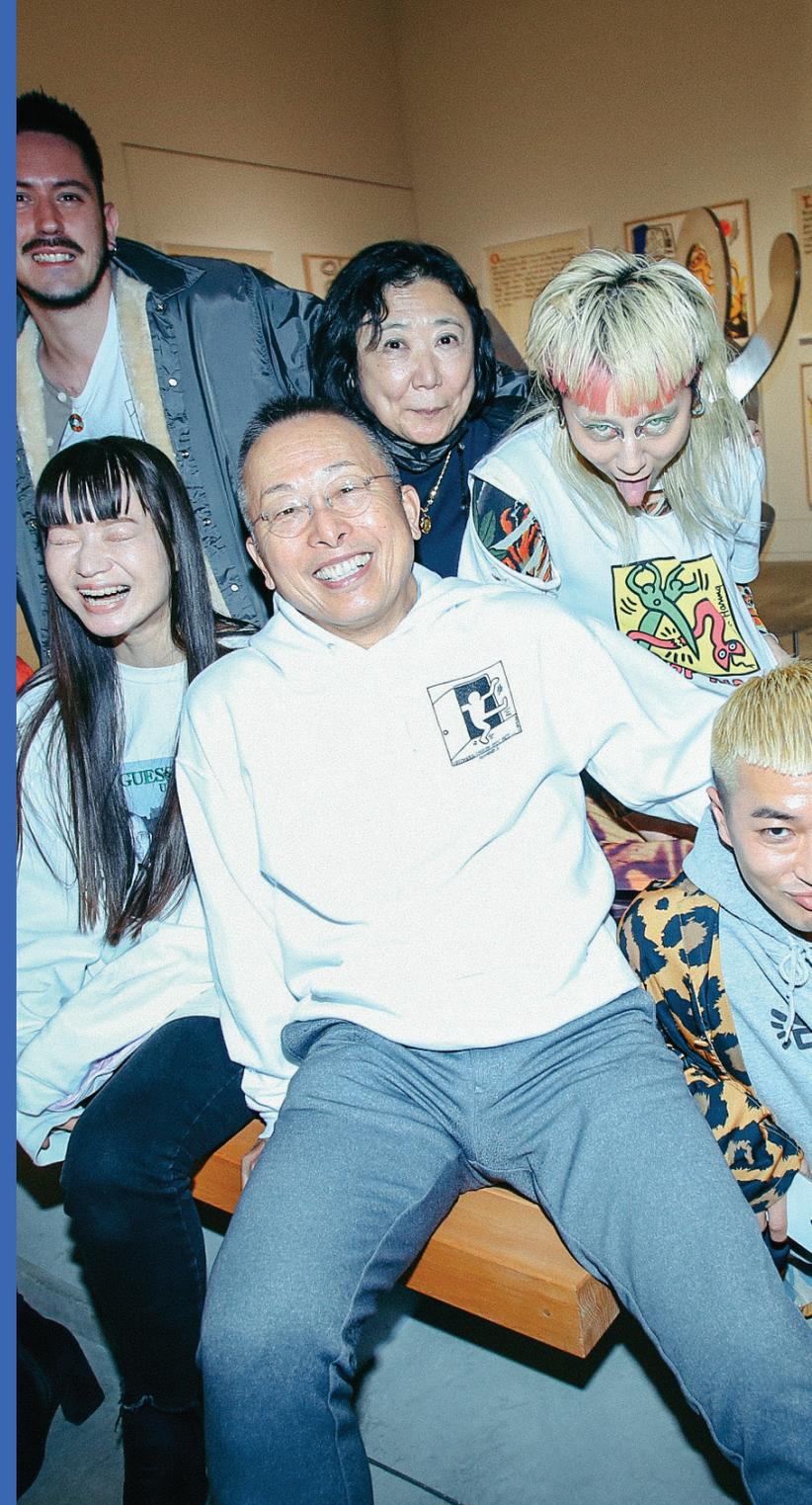


11. Founder's Statement

Keith Haring believed that art should be clear, open, and available to everyone. The Nakamura Keith Haring Collection was created to keep that belief alive.

Rather than preserving his work as something untouchable, the museum treats it as a starting point for conversation. By connecting art with the realities of everyday life, the Collection continues Haring's idea that communication itself can be a form of action.

Kazuo Nakamura
Founder, Nakamura Keith Haring Collection



About Kobuchizawa Art & Wellness IKIGAI Village

The Nakamura Keith Haring Collection is part of Kobuchizawa Art & Wellness IKIGAI Village, a cultural and wellness complex in Yamanashi Prefecture. The village integrates art, nature, hospitality, and recreation, offering visitors a setting where cultural experience and well-being coexist.



Contact and Online Presence

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X (Twitter): https://twitter.com/nakamura_haring

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nakamuraharing>

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