

Press Release
June 11, 2025

Ryan Gander: YOU COMPLETE ME

May 31 – November 30, 2025

Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan

The exhibition marks Gander's first solo museum show in Japan in three years, and presents recent and newly produced works made after 2023, following the COVID-19 pandemic.



*You are repetitive and productive but you dream of being free (detail), 2025
Courtesy the artist and TAO NASU, Tokyo. Photo: Shu Nakagawa*

The Pola Museum of Art is pleased to present an exhibition featuring the most recent works of Ryan Gander.

Ryan Gander (b.1976) is an internationally acclaimed artist based in Suffolk, UK, whose practice encompasses painting, sculpture, video, text, VR installations, architecture, publications, typefaces, rituals, and performances. Through this wide-ranging, multifaceted body of work, Gander continually reexamines the frameworks and meanings of art. In addition to his own creative activities, he is deeply engaged in curating exhibitions, teaching at universities and art institutions, and supporting young artists and children through various initiatives. He has also written and edited numerous books and has both produced and appeared in television programs that promote art and culture. His practice reimagines the role and subjectivity of the artist for the contemporary era.

Describing himself as “a sort of neo-conceptualist and amateur philosopher with a ‘no-style’ style,” Gander creates works that may appear personable at first glance, yet are underpinned by profound thought and incisive humour. The new works presented in this exhibition explore a range of themes, including empathy and narcissism, time and mortality, invisibility and prejudice, and investigations into autism spectrum conditions.

Animal motifs in Gander's work—such as a frog, a bird, and mice—often appear as symbols of innocence or “alternative knowledge.” Their voices and perspectives offer

ways to understand the essence of humanity. A bird known as a painted bunting hiding inside a cuckoo clock quietly portends that what civilisation has bestowed upon us is not order, but rather a curse. In an age when artificial intelligence is advancing at a dizzying pace and instantly available answers just as quickly lose their value, Gander's work asserts the enduring value of doubt and questioning.

Scattered throughout the museum are questions posed by children—some may seem nonsensical, even “weak.” But are they truly worthless? What obstructs our imagination from reaching a different answer: the huge balloon looming before us, or something within ourselves? Listen closely to the tale of the frog, from which the exhibition takes its name:

“You just mourn the thing I am not. You see, when you see me, you don't see me. You see the differences. You see the things I can't do, that you can do, and so you constantly define me by that yardstick, but you lack vision. Vision for the things that I can do. (...) My happiness, and the consequences of my being in this world, is not limited to your metric. You're missing the macro.”

Outside the museum, a flag is flying, on which an extraordinary variety of unrelated symbolic graphics coexist on an equal plane. In an era that champions diversity, we are nonetheless prone to fixating on the “weakness” of others. But what constitutes true weakness—or strength? “It may in fact be I who is mistaken.” With wit and imagination, through the discursive power of language and narrative, Gander's works turn our norms inside out and gently invert how we see the world.

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Do shadows have sounds?, 2025
Courtesy the artist and TAO NASU, Tokyo. Photo: Shu Nakagawa

Artist's Statement

"Everything is material... A broken dinosaur bone, a vindictive word that is regretted later, a prayer, a sweet taste that reminds you of summer, a question that is impossible to answer, a sly glance intended to seduce, the sound of a blind person's stick tapping on the pavement, a sweaty palm holding too much money, the clumsy touch of a lover, the melody before an announcement at the railway station, somebody else's idea stolen, an act of kindness, shade from the sun, the arrogance of efficient art, the obsessiveness of inefficient art, every thought and experience that you the visitor has ever had, every person the music of chance brings to you, a frog's fable, an ego viewed through a mirror, a code, the cold, a clown, a cat, a clock and a rock.

In the ideal art world, nothing exists in isolation, everything is colliding and reverberating incessantly. The ideal art world I see is full of invisible things, where everything is interconnected in infinite combinations. It is full of everything I don't know. This is my palette and you are the colours and you are endlessly diverse and real. You complete me." — Ryan Gander

Ryan Gander

Born 1976 in Chester, UK, currently lives and works in Suffolk and London. In recent years, he has had major solo exhibitions at such institutions as the Museo Helga de Alvear (Cañeres, Spain, 2024), Ishikawa Cultural Foundation (Okayama, Japan, 2023), Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (2022), NUA East Gallery (Norwich, UK, 2022), Space K (Seoul, 2021), Kunsthalle Bern (Switzerland, 2019), Dazaifu Shrine (Fukuoka, Japan, 2017), National Museum of Art, Osaka (Japan, 2017), Aspen Art Museum (USA, 2016), Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (Canada, 2016), Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver, 2015), Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (Melbourne, 2015). He has participated in numerous international exhibitions such as the Manchester International Festival (2023), Liverpool Biennale (2018), Biennale of Sydney (2018), DOCUMENTA (2012), and the Venice Biennale (2011). In 2017 he was awarded an OBE (Order of British Empire) for services to contemporary art. In 2022 he was elected as Royal Academician for the category of Sculpture.

General Information

Ryan Gander: YOU COMPLETE ME

Dates | May 31 – November 30, 2025 Open daily

Venue | Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan

Organiser | Pola Museum of Art, Pola Art Foundation

Support | TARO NASU, Hakone Gora KARAKU

Curator | Suzuki Kota (Senior Curator, Pola Museum of Art)

Press Contacts

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E-mail: info@polamuseum.or.jp

Official Website <https://www.polamuseum.or.jp/en/>

Social Media Channels <https://www.instagram.com/polamuseumofart/>

About the Pola Museum of Art

A Symbiosis between Art and Nature

Nestled deep within the lush forests of Hakone, Kanagawa Prefecture, the Pola Museum of Art opened its doors in 2002 with a mission to realize a symbiosis between art and nature. Embracing the rich natural beauty of its surroundings, the museum was meticulously designed to minimize its environmental impact. With its aboveground structure restricted to just eight meters in height, the majority of the building lies below the forest floor—seamlessly integrated into the landscape.

The core of the museum's collection is the legacy of the late Tsuneshi Suzuki, the second-generation head of the founding family of the Pola group, who assembled an extraordinary range of works over four decades. Today, the museum houses an expansive and diverse collection that spans Western paintings, yōga (Western-style

Japanese paintings), Nihonga (Japanese-style paintings), prints, East Asian ceramics, glassworks, and historical cosmetic utensils from every age and region.

In recent years, the museum has expanded its focus to encompass works by leading figures in contemporary art, thereby extending its perspective toward the diverse and evolving expressions of our time. With its exceptional collection, verdant surroundings, and radiant architecture, the museum exemplifies the ideal of symbiosis.



Opening Hours:

9:00 – 17:00 (Last admission 16:30) | Open daily

Admission:

Adults | ¥2,200

University / High school students | ¥1,700

Junior high school students and younger | Free

Address:

1285 Sengokuhara, Hakone, Kanagawa, 250-0631 Japan

Tel : 0460-84-2111

Ryan Gander: YOU COMPLETE ME Visuals available for the Press

Conditions of use for the visuals available for the Press

- These visual images of artworks may only be used to illustrate an article related to the exhibition.
- Any manipulation or modification (including cropping or text overlay) of the artwork is forbidden.
- In no case may use be made of the images outside the period of the exhibition.
- Images may only be used in low definition on websites.



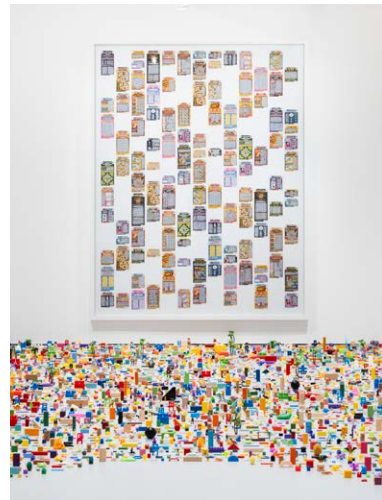
You are repetitive and productive but you dream of being free (detail), 2025
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



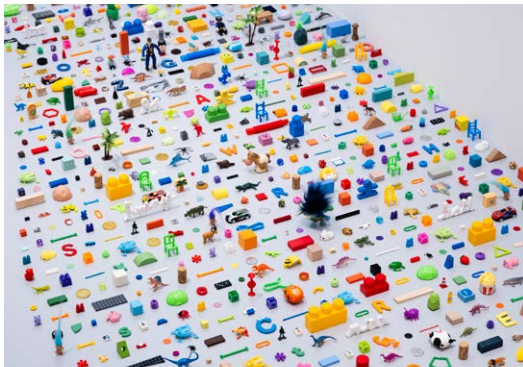
You Complete Me, or I see things you can't see (A Frog's Tale), 2025
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Do shadows have sounds?, 2025
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Installation view, Ryan Gander: YOU COMPLETE ME, Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, 2025
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Closed systems (detail), 2024
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Chronos Kairos, 03.02, 2025
 Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
 Photo: Shu Nakagawa



The story is in the telling, 2025
Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Installation view, Ryan Gander: *YOU COMPLETE ME*,
Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, 2025
Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Do ghosts have teeth? (Your questions in a world that only wants answers) (detail), 2025
Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Can time stop?, 2025
Courtesy the artist and TARO NASU, Tokyo.
Photo: Shu Nakagawa



Pola Museum of Art