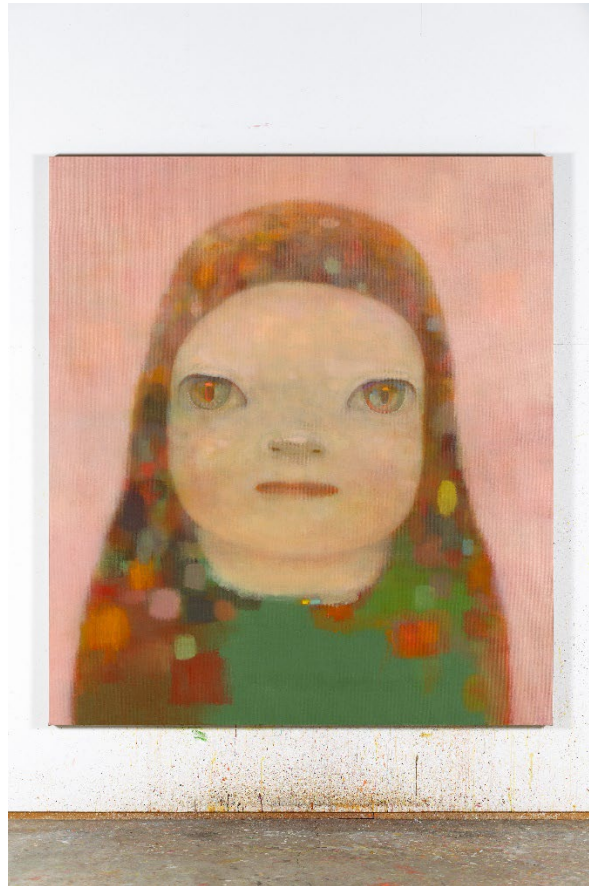


SFMOMA OPENS MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF YOSHITOMO NARA IN FALL 2027

**Exhibition Marks Northern California's First Comprehensive Survey of
Nara's Artistic Practice**



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 13, 2026) – The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) today announced a major retrospective of Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara, opening in Fall 2027. Occupying the museum's Floor 7 galleries, the exhibition brings together approximately 100 works including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, sound and photography—the first comprehensive survey of Nara's work in Northern California.

"SFMOMA is proud to bring this sweeping celebration of Yoshitomo Nara's work to the Bay Area," said Christopher Bedford, Helen and Charles Schwab Director of SFMOMA. "This exhibition promises to intrigue and inspire visitors of all ages and backgrounds—deeply

aligning with SFMOMA's vision to engage a wide and diverse audience, as well as our goal to expand local and global dialogues around art and art history."

Nara's multidisciplinary practice often features a recurring figure who is quietly vulnerable yet resolute, embodying isolation, emotional self-reliance and inward resistance. His solitary protagonists, set against spare backdrops, meet viewers with a fragile intensity that invites empathy without offering easy reassurance. Drawing on folk music, punk subculture and postwar visual culture, Nara's work privileges psychological freedom and personal authenticity. Nara's humanitarian engagement—through travel photography documenting marginalized communities from Indigenous to colonized cultures—extends into anti-nuclear and anti-war commitments, where he uses image and text as forms of intimate solidarity rather than didactic protest. His installations transform this introspection into collective experience, fostering shared reflection across cultural boundaries.



At the exhibition's center is the first international presentation of *Voyage of the Moon (Resting Moon)*, 2006, a fairy-tale cottage of the artist's drawing studio, crowned by a painted moon head keeping watch from its roof—an image rooted in Nara's childhood fascination with the night sky. Since the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and Fukushima disaster, the introspective quality of his work has intensified, with paintings featuring layered surfaces, diffused brushwork and subjects with searching gazes. Nara's recent hand-formed sculptures resist modernist formalities, retaining traces of touch and imperfection.

Together, these works offer a quiet meditation on how art endures and how interior life persists in the current moment.



ABOUT YOSHITOMO NARA

Born in 1959, Yoshitomo Nara grew up in Hirosaki, located in Japan's rural northern prefecture of Aomori. He studied painting at Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music, Nagakute, Japan, graduating in 1987. The following year, he moved to Germany, completing his studies at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Nara would spend 12 years living in Germany and began his career during the decade he was based in Cologne. Since the mid-1990s, Nara has exhibited widely in Europe, the United States, Japan and across Asia.

Nara considers himself, first and foremost, a painter, but his wider practice encompasses drawing; sculpture in wood, Fiber-Reinforced Polymer (FRP), ceramic, bronze, and aluminum; installations that incorporate found objects and repurposed materials; and photography, through which he regularly documents his travels and everyday encounters.

Works by Nara are held in notable public collections worldwide. Across the United States, his work is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; among many more.

Recent venues for major solo exhibitions include Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA (2021); Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (2022); Aomori Museum of Art, Japan (2023); Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain (2024); Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany (2024); and Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2025).

ORGANIZATION

This Yoshitomo Nara exhibition is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). It is curated by Mika Yoshitake, guest curator, with Nancy Lim, SFMOMA associate curator of painting and sculpture.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

151 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary art in the United States and a thriving cultural center for the Bay Area. Our remarkable collection of painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, design and media arts is housed in a LEED Gold-certified building designed by the global architects Snøhetta and Mario Botta. In addition to our seven gallery floors, SFMOMA now offers over 45,000 square feet of free, art-filled public space open to all.

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Image credits:

Yoshitomo Nara, *Matryoshka*, 2026; photo: Keita Saiki

Yoshitomo Nara, *Voyage of the Moon (Resting Moon)*, 2006; collection of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa; photo: Atsushi Nakamichi / Nacása & Partners, courtesy of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Yoshitomo Nara; photo: Ryoichi Kawajiri