

At Art Basel Hong Kong 2026: Zero10
√K Contemporary presents Emi Kusano's *Ornament Survival*



Ornament Survival - Nursing the Machine (2026)

HONG KONG — At Art Basel Hong Kong 2026 Zero10, Tokyo-based gallery √K Contemporary is proud to present *Ornament Survival*, a new installation by multidisciplinary artist Emi Kusano.

In this exhibition, Kusano presents a space composed of an iconic sculpture, a single-channel video, and two-dimensional works, reconstructing the iconography of the "Transforming Heroine" from the history of Japanese animation.

In 2026, where infinite realities are continuously generated by AI, the act of transformation—once a symbol of female empowerment—has taken on a new significance. It has become a vital survival strategy: a way to refuse burial as mere "noise" within the vast ocean of information, and instead to continue shining as a unique "signal."

Anchoring the center of the space is an oversized sculpture reminiscent of the magical compacts wielded by 90s transforming heroines. Yet, this is not merely a tool of fantasy. It serves as a compass for navigating this complex world on one's own terms, resonating with algorithms. Here, "Kawaii" and ornamentation function not as symbols to be consumed, but as sophisticated code to establish the individual within an expanded digital space.

The uniformed clones, proliferating through recursive generative AI processes, are portraits of a new humanity that lightly traverses the boundary between the physical and the digital. Rather than being dominated by the system, they "wear" the system, swimming freely through this new world.

Ornament Survival presents the evolution of technology and the corresponding transformation of human desire. Within the endless loop of optimization, the impulse to shine ever more intensely is not a tragedy, but a beautiful and powerful manifesto for surviving the age of algorithms.

About Artist | Emi Kusano (1990 -)



Synthetic Reflection by Emi Kusano
(2023)

Emi Kusano (b. 1990, Tokyo) is a multidisciplinary artist and a leading figure in the global Generative AI art scene. She began her career as a teenage street photographer documenting Harajuku fashion, with early works featured at the Victoria and Albert Museum. These early experiences in fashion and photography informed her vision of how mass media shapes individual and collective identities.

Since then, her practice has evolved to integrate emerging technologies—positioning AI as a collaborative partner rather than a defining element. Through this process, she critically explores nostalgia, pop culture, and collective memory in the digital age.

Her work has been exhibited internationally in over 20 countries at major institutions including M+ Museum (Hong Kong), Saatchi Gallery (London), Grand Palais Immersif (Paris), Museum Francisco Carolinum (Linz), and the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. She has also participated in major international art fairs such as Frieze and Untitled Art Miami. Notably, her acclaimed series *Office Ladies* was featured at Paris Photo, garnering global attention for its unique fusion of photographic sensibilities and AI generation.

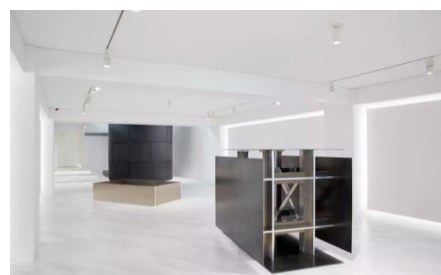
Kusano's market presence continues to rise, highlighted by her participation in a Gucci-Christie's auction in 2023 and a charity auction by Christie's and UNHCR in 2024. Beyond visual art, she is the founder and lead singer of the music group Satellite Young, reinterpreting 1980s J-POP through a contemporary sci-fi lens at global events like SXSW. In 2025, she was recognized as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.

Most recently, Kusano held her first New York solo exhibition, *Ego in the Shell*, a collaboration with cyber punk anime series *Ghost in the Shell*, which received strong critical acclaim. Following Art Basel, she will present a major solo exhibition at √K Contemporary in May, 2026.

Web : <https://www.emikusano.art/> | IG : @emiksn | X : @emikusano

√K Contemporary

Established in 2020 in Kagurazaka, Tokyo, √K Contemporary is a contemporary art gallery that transcends borders of genre, generation, and nationality. With a 300-square-meter space reminiscent of a gallery in outer space, √K Contemporary redefines the relationship between artwork and viewer. The gallery curates exhibitions with a distinctive aesthetic, presenting exceptional artists from prewar Japan to the contemporary era. By engaging deeply with works that span art history, the gallery fosters a dialogue that links past and present, and contributes to the shaping of future cultural landscapes.



Installation View:
Wall to Wall, Noriyuki Haraguchi, 2020

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