

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

For Immediate Release

Press contacts: Sherrill Ingalls, 408-271-6872 or singalls@sjmusart.org

Karen Hsu, 408-291-5374 or khsu@sjmusart.org

Digital images available for download at <https://www.flickr.com/gp/sjma/zxhe53> or upon request

SJMA TO PRESENT FIRST U.S. MUSEUM EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO JAPANESE ARTIST TABAIMO BEGINNING FEBRUARY 6

New Stories from the Edge of Asia/ *Tabaimo: Her Room* will include the artist's technically sophisticated, room-sized animations as well as a new, site-specific wall drawing

SAN JOSE, California (November 30, 2015)—The San Jose Museum of Art will present the first solo museum exhibition in the United States of the work of renowned Japanese artist Tabaimo. *Tabaimo: Her Room*, the third exhibition in SJMA's series "New Stories from the Edge of Asia," will be on view from February 6, 2016, through August 21, 2016. The exhibition will showcase three of the artist's encompassing video animations, which are projected onto walls that curve and tumble into space. In these works—two never before seen in the United States—Tabaimo explores the surreal and uncanny aspects of life in contemporary Japanese society. Also on view will be eighteen delicate scroll-like ink drawings and a wall drawing commissioned for this occasion, which exemplifies Tabaimo's interest in strangely transforming everyday spaces.

"Tabaimo is one of the most important new-media artists working in Japan today and the mysterious, shapeshifting worlds of her mesmerizing animations have captivated audiences around the globe, from Venice to Sydney," said Susan Krane, Oshman Executive Director of SJMA. "It is the San Jose Museum of Art's honor to bring her work to the Bay Area for the first time, given the museum's longstanding commitment to new approaches to new media. While Tabaimo takes animation into fantastical visual realms, she also opens a trapdoor into soulful and intimate psychological territory—as visitors to this exhibition will so clearly see."

"In her drawings and video installations, Tabaimo focuses on the anxieties beneath the surface of everyday life and uncovers a darker world that exists behind the exterior of contemporary Japan's well-ordered society," said Rory Padeken, assistant curator at SJMA and curator of the exhibition. "Often set in communal spaces such as public restrooms, commuter trains, and bathhouses, her animations depict seemingly mundane situations, but her scenes unfold into absurd (and sometimes grotesque) dreamlike narratives. Ordinary interiors mutate, disembodied body parts perform tasks, and moments of violence erupt."

Tabaimo creates her richly layered animations from thousands of drawings she makes using an automatic calligraphy brush. Her imagery—with its muted color palette, linearity, and everyday subject matter—is inspired by traditional nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints (ukiyo-e). Yet Tabaimo's style is

very much a 21st-century hybrid: she contrasts the past with the present and blends tradition with oblique references to contemporary Japanese comics (manga) and animation (anime) as well.

By projecting her videos onto carefully designed architectural configurations, Tabaimo envelops viewers in the experience of her surreal worlds. She deliberately encourages both physical engagement and contemplation. *Tabaimo: Her Room* will include the video installations *danDAN* (2009), *yudangami* (2009), and *aitaisei-josei* (2015), as well as a selection of related drawings from *akunin* (2006-2007). All were inspired by the novel *Akunin (Villain)*, (2007), a psychological thriller by author Shuichi Yoshida set in contemporary Japan.

danDAN (2009), a three-channel video installation, takes place in a cross-sectional view of a public housing apartment (danchi), where many of the novel's characters reside. Tabaimo imagines glimpses of the lives contained in each unit—and reveals behavior that ranges from the mundane to the disturbing.

In *yudangami* (2009), Tabaimo presents an offbeat narrative about a minor character from the book, Miho Kaneko, a former massage parlor girl. The animation, framed by a swinging curtain of black hair, appears as if it's from inside someone's head. Here, Tabaimo explores the sense of disconnection and unease that young adults face as they navigate between the real and the virtual worlds of urban Japan.

Miho Kaneko's troubled affair with Yuichi Shimizu is a plot point of Yoshida's wildly popular book. In the third of Tabaimo's related installations, *aitaisei-josei* (2015), she connects this tragic love story with that of the beautiful courtesan Ohatsu and her lover Tokubei from *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki (Sonezaki Shinju)*, a famous eighteenth-century puppet theater (bunraku) play. Her fantastical narrative takes place in an uncannily animated house, haunted by the ghostly activities of Miho, wherein Ohatsu and Tokubei are represented as a sofa and table who twist and bend at night.

Tabaimo: Her Room is the third exhibition in SJMA's ongoing series "New Stories from the Edge of Asia," which features work by artists from Pacific Rim countries and cultures who push the boundaries of narrative using experimental animation, video, film, gaming, and interactive technologies.

About the Artist:

Born Ayako Tabata in 1975 in Hyogo, Japan, Tabaimo graduated from Kyoto University of Art and Design, Japan in 1999. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Kirin Contemporary Award, grand prize (1999); Sakuya Konohana Prize (2001); 12th Annual Award to a Promising Artist and Scholar in the Field of Contemporary Art, Japan Cultural Arts Foundation (2005); 19th Takashimaya Art Award, Takashimaya Culture Foundation (2008); and Art Encouragement Prize, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan (2011). Her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions throughout Japan and the world with solo presentations at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2003 and 2006); Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (2006); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2009); The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2010); Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London (2010); and Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan (2010). In 2011, Tabaimo represented Japan at the 54th Venice Biennale, Italy. The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, presented a survey exhibition of Tabaimo's work in 2014. Her work is included in the collections of the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Museum of Art, Osaka;

Philadelphia Museum of Art; and Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan. Tabaimo lives and works in Karuizawa, Japan.

New Stories from the Edge of Asia/ *Tabaimo: Her Room* is sponsored by the Richard A. Karp Charitable Foundation, Applied Materials Foundation, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and Tad and Jackson Freese.

The exhibition is made possible also by the support of the Japan Foundation, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Lucia Cha and Dr. Jerrold Hiura, Olivia Padeken-Kenolio and David Kenolio, and the Consulate of Japan in San Francisco. In-kind support for equipment is provided by James Cohan, New York and Genelec.

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

The San Jose Museum of Art celebrates new ideas, stimulates creativity, and inspires connection with every visit. Welcoming and thought-provoking, the Museum rejects stuffiness and delights visitors with its surprising and playful perspective on the art and artists of our time.

The San Jose Museum of Art is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San Jose, California. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 11 PM to 5 PM and until 8 PM or later on the third Thursday of each month. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$6 for students with ID, and \$5 for youth ages 7 -17. Members and children 6 and under are admitted free. For more information, call 408-271-6840 or visit www.SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

###

Programs at the San Jose Museum of Art are made possible by generous operating support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Yvonne and Mike Nevens, a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San Jose, and the Richard A. Karp Charitable Foundation.