

KARIMOKU PRESS RELEASE – MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2025

A SPECIAL LOUNGE SPACE CREATED BY KARIMOKU NEW STANDARD AND MAS

KNS & MAS Lounge at Capsule Plaza



The brand *Karimoku New Standard (KNS)*, which focuses on the use of low-diameter domestic hardwood trees, and *MAS*, a woodworking furniture brand born from dialogue with primarily domestic softwood, will jointly exhibit at Capsule Plaza, hosted by Capsule, during Milan Design Week 2025, from 7 April (Mon) to 13 April (Sun).

This exhibition is directed by David Glättli, Creative Director of KNS, and Wataru Kumano, Design Director of MAS. In collaboration with Capsule, they will create a space where Japanese traditional aesthetics and contemporary design intersect.

The venue will incorporate elements of Japanese culture, such as tatami mats (traditional woven flooring) and noren curtains (short fabric dividers often hung in doorways), showcasing specially upholstered KNS sofas and MAS prototypes premiering for the first time. A video installation titled "City Plants" by photographers Shinji Otani and Taisuke Koyama (Tokyo Photographic Research) will be screened within the curated space. This piece captures the intersection of plants quietly thriving in urban spaces and people's everyday lives, questioning our relationship with nature in the city.

Visitors are invited to remove their shoes and walk on tatami mats, allowing them to experience Japanese culture while interacting with the furniture. Watching videos that portray the subtle presence of nature weaving into human life refines the senses and offers a moment of dialogue with the exhibit. These experiences aim to inspire reflections on a future where people and nature coexist.

A Lounge Designed Like a Landscape

The exhibition space is designed to resemble a landscape. Sofas in vivid yellow upholstery reminiscent of a flower field are scattered throughout. Japanese identity is subtly expressed through elements like tatami and noren, creating a space where modern design and traditional Japanese beauty intersect in harmony. From KNS, iconic pieces such as the Polar Sofa, Castor Lobby Sofa, and Elephant Pouf Task will be showcased, along with a lighting prototype by the French design duo CPRV. MAS will unveil prototypes such as a sofa by Wataru Kumano and a basket by Shigeki Fujishiro. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes, a gesture in Japan that symbolises relaxation and comfort. This quiet ritual offers a moment of release from the bustle of Milan Design Week, encouraging deeper engagement with the exhibition.

Video Installation “City Plants”



Shinji Otani “City Plants”



Taisuke Koyama “City Plants”

One of the symbolic highlights of this lounge is the video installation “City Plants” by Shinji Otani and Taisuke Koyama (Tokyo Photographic Research). Featuring imagery such as plants growing through cracks in asphalt, potted plants discreetly placed by citizens, and forgotten green corners of the city, “City Plants” uses two video works to portray nature quietly living within inorganic urban environments and gradually reclaiming and transforming them. The plants, finding the slightest of gaps, grow flexibly and powerfully—becoming a tribute to the resilience and beauty of nature that never fades, even in adversity. Sitting on the lounge sofas, visitors can quietly immerse themselves in this visual world and reflect on how we relate to nature. It becomes a serene moment, reconnecting us with the natural world we may have begun to forget amidst the noise of everyday life.



©Koos Breukel

Shinji Otani

Shinji Otani was a ceramist in Japan before he decided to become a photographer. In 2007 he finished his study in photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. He won the Unseen Dummy Award 2012 from Unseen photo fair Amsterdam and selected awards including Epson art photo awards in Germany and Raymond Weil photo award in Switzerland. Shinji's work has been exhibited in The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, UK, USA and Japan (including Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam, Foam in Amsterdam, Sieboldhuis in Leiden, Ibasho Gallery in Antwerp, G/P gallery, POST in Tokyo and Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine Museum in Fukuoka) Lives and works in The Netherlands.

Web: <https://shinjiotani.com/>

Instagram: [@shinjiotani](https://www.instagram.com/shinjiotani)



©Shota Tsukiyama

Taisuke Koyama (Tokyo Photographic Research)

Born in 1978. Lives and works in Tokyo. With a background in studying biology and the natural environment, Koyama present photographic works, video pieces, and installations created through an experimental approach. Major exhibitions include NEW ANXIETIES (N/A & FF Seoul, Seoul, 2025), the Switzerland-Japan 160th Anniversary Photography Exhibition SUPER NATURAL! (YAU CENTER, Tokyo, 2024), the solo exhibition UNIVERSAL FLOWING (THE FLOW, Osaka, 2024), and AIMIA | AGO PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE 2017 (Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada, 2017), among others. Since 2018, he have led the collective TOKYO PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, which focuses on “multifaceted urban research” and “practical exploration of contemporary photography.”

Web: www.tiskkym.com

Instagram: [@taisuke_koyama](https://www.instagram.com/taisuke_koyama)

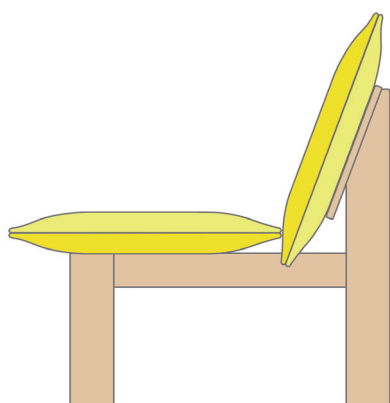
Web: www.tokyophotographicresearch.jp

Instagram: [tokyophotographicresearch](https://www.instagram.com/tokyophotographicresearch)

New Products



WK Sofa Series (Prototype)



The WK Sofa Series is inspired by Japanese zabuton cushions and was designed to create a new typology that lies between a sofa and a bench. Utilizing the light yet durable properties of cypress wood, the seat and backrest are placed on a generously crafted wooden frame and arranged like zabuton cushions, providing both a sense of lightness and relaxation. Its simple form seamlessly integrates into both private and public spaces, making it suitable for a wide range of environments. The series offers a variety of size options, including a one-seater, two-seater, three-seater, short bench, long bench, and daybed. Additionally, by combining it with the WK Side table 01 (Prototype) or VK Side table 01, users can enjoy flexible layouts tailored to different spaces and purposes. The reversible backrest allows for different fabric and colour combinations, enabling seasonal or situational customization.

WK Side table 01 (Prototype)

The WK Side table 01 is a side table designed to complement the WK Sofa Series. With a single leg as a central support system, the table top can be positioned close to the sofa seat cushion, allowing for optimal functionality. The table top can therefore be used as a convenient surface, such as a sofa arm, a table for light PC work and for further practical purposes.



Wataru Kumano

Product designer. He studied in Finland from 2001 to 2008 and worked for Jasper Morrison after returning to Japan. He established the design office “kumano” in 2011, and works on projects with domestic and foreign furniture makers such as Nikari, Karimoku and Tendo Mokko, based on the theme of design with a background such as environment, functionality, and regional characteristics. In 2021, he was invited at the Lausanne Cantonal School of Art (ECAL) in Switzerland, and in the fall of the same year he became an associate professor at Musashino Art University.

Web: <https://watarukumano.jp>

Instagram: [@watarukumano](https://www.instagram.com/watarukumano)

SF Basket 01 (Prototype)

The SF Basket 01 is a modern storage basket that combines solid laminated wood with intricately woven flat cords. Its design balances simplicity and elegance, featuring a sturdy wooden frame with four legs on an oval base and a gently curved basket reminiscent of a boat's hull. This thoughtful construction ensures visual harmony while enhancing both stability and practicality. Elevated slightly off the floor, the basket remains steady and functional when filled. It serves a variety of purposes — perfect for storing blankets by the sofa, keeping slippers organized by the entrance, or tidying up children's toys. Additionally, the main frame and basket can be easily detached, making cleaning effortless. Its washable design adds to its convenience for everyday use. Available in two sizes, the SF Basket 01 is also ideal for cafés and retail spaces as an aesthetic luggage storage solution. The baskets are stackable, allowing for compact storage and easy maintenance. With its minimalist yet refined aesthetic and versatile functionality, the SF Basket 01 seamlessly integrates into any living space.



Shigeki Fujishiro

After working as a designer for IDÉE Co., Ltd. he established his own studio, shigeki fujishiro design, in 2005. His activities are focused on interior products. While collaborating with brands such as Hermès, Adidas and the Arita porcelain brand 2016/, he also designs, produces and distributes his own products. In recent years, he has participated in projects such as 'Knit!' by Danish company KVADRAT, 'OUR BAMBOO' in collaboration with Japan Creative, and the 'AJI project' using Aji stone from Kagawa Prefecture.

Exhibition Summary

Date: 7 April (Mon) – 13 April (Sun) 2025

Venue: Spazio Maiocchi, Via Achille Maiocchi, 7, 20129 Milano MI

Time: 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM (7 April: 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM only)

Hosted by: Karimoku Furniture

Directed by: Wataru Kumano (MAS Design Director), David Glättli (KNS Creative Director)

Video Installation: Shinji Otani, Taisuke Koyama (Tokyo Photographic Research)

Artist Coordination: Sawako Fukai

Events During the Exhibition

On 7 April (Mon), the first day of the exhibition, there will be a press day and public opening at the venue. In addition, many talk sessions and workshops by the various exhibitors will take place throughout the exhibition.

Details of each event will be published shortly on the Capsule website.

Capsule web: <https://capsule.global/>



Karimoku New Standard, founded in 2009, is a brand that combines progressive ideas and manufacturing excellence. Bringing together the unique perspectives of Karimoku Furniture's craftsmen and a select group of international designers, the brand presents new standards in Japanese furniture design. By using domestic low-diameter hardwood trees, which are often discarded or used as paper pulp, KNS aims to make a sustainable contribution to the challenges facing Japan's forests, such as revitalization of the forests and the industries they support.

<https://www.karimoku-newstandard.jp/en/>

[@karimokunewstandard](#)



Introducing MAS, a woodworking furniture brand born from a dialogue with various woods spread across Japan. By exploring new methods and expressions without being bound by established rules, the company brings valuable products with a universal appeal to the world. Through its shared design language, MAS embraces the inherent charm of its chosen material, crafting practical forms that harmonize with various environments. With an understated, functional, and inclusive elegance, MAS furniture embodies contemporary utility and aesthetics, creating beautiful landscapes intertwined with people's lives.

<https://mas.karimoku.com/en/>

[@mas_karimoku](#)



The origins of Karimoku Furniture date back to 1940, when Shohei Kato took over a longstanding timber company and established a small woodworking shop in the town of Kariya, Aichi. The company produced various wooden parts in the ensuing decades, developing a range of techniques before launching its own line of wooden furniture in the 1960s. Building upon the concept of manufacturing high-tech and high-touch products, the company established bases in timber production areas and soon developed into one of Japan's leading manufacturers of wooden furniture.

www.karimoku.com

[@karimoku_official](#)

PRESS CONTACT

For additional press information, high-resolution images or interview requests, please contact:

INTERNATIONAL

Brand. Kiosk
E karimoku@brand-kiosk.com
T +49 (0)69 2649 1122
www.brand-kiosk.com

JAPAN

PR Representative, Karimoku Furniture
E pr-commons@karimoku.co.jp