

**“A Conversation with Yoshitomo Nara: Experiencing the Life of Syrian Refugees”
To be held on June 15 during World Refugee Week**

—As part of the “JPF×ART” project, contemporary artist Yoshitomo Nara’s visit to refugee camps in Jordan will be shown for the first time!—

In early March, JPF visited two refugee camps in Jordan (Zaatari, Azraq) and a host community in its capital Amman with world recognized contemporary artist, Yoshitomo Nara. As part of “JPF×ART” project, Nara met with Syrian refugees and experienced their life in Jordan, where JPF has been delivering aid through its Response Program for the Iraq-Syria Humanitarian Crisis since 2012.

At this event, Nara’s visit will be shown to the public for the first time.

During the first session, Nara will show photos that he took and share his experience meeting Syrian refugees in Jordan and what he felt. He will also show some of his artwork and talk about what is always on his mind. During his visit to Jordan Nara told the children he met that everyone is unique and that Japan, Jordan and Syria are similar in that what you find is different depending on where you are within the country.—What was the message that he wanted to communicate?

The second session will be interactive. Staff members of JPF member NGOs working on the ground will talk about the current situation of aid-giving and respond to questions from the audience, together with Nara.



This is a rare opportunity to hear Nara speak on this topic. We hope that you can join us for this event.



Yoshitomo Nara : Profile

Born in Aomori Prefecture in 1959, Nara graduated with an MFA from the Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music, Aichi Prefecture, in 1987. He completed his studies at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, Germany in 1988, and after living in Cologne, he returned to Japan in 2000. Since the mid-1990s he has been the subject of numerous exhibitions at museums and galleries in Europe, the United States, Japan, and Asia. His practice encompasses portraiture in which the subjects appear to stare back at the viewer; loosely drawn works on paper; sculptures made of wood, FRP, ceramic, bronze; and multi-media installations that completely redefine the gallery space. His work also includes photographs that document the daily creation of his works, as well as the variety of encounters he has during his travels.

* Nara supported JPF in assisting people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 through donations as well as by [providing a public message and giving JPF permission to use his artwork.](#)

* June 20 is “The World Refugee Day” resolved by the UN General Assembly.

✧ **How to participate : Register via online form below by June 10 (Mon)**
<https://www.japanplatform.org/event/application/nara/>

* Registration closed when all spaces are filled. Please register at your earliest convenience.

✧ **If you would like to set up a separate interview, please contact Kyodo News Digital, the co-organizer of the event. Contact information is listed below.**

Overview of event

Date: June 15, 2019 (Sat)

Time: 1:30 PM-4:00 PM (Doors open at 1:00PM)

Venue: United Nations University, 2nd Floor Reception Hall
(5-53-70 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo)

*10-minute walk from JR Shibuya Station, 7-minute walk from Tokyo Metro Omotesando Station Exit B2 (Ginza, Hanzomon and Chiyoda Lines)

The number of participants: 90

Organized by: Japan Platform (JPF)

Languages: Japanese, English (simultaneous interpretation will be provided)



At Zaatari camp, spending time with Abdullah's children after lunch ©JPF

Program

1:30PM **Opening remarks and introduction to JPF×ART**

by Noriko Takasugi, Deputy Manager, Public/ Media Communications, Japan Platform

Video "Nara's visit to Syrian Refugee Camps"

1:45PM **Talk** by contemporary artist Yoshitomo Nara, **"The people I met at the refugee camps and what is always on my mind"**

2:45PM Break

2:55PM **Open panel discussion, "Connecting Nara's experiences and the audience: Putting yourself in another's shoes"**

*This will be an interactive session where the panelists talk about the current situation of aid and respond to questions from the audience.

- Panelists: Yoshitomo Nara (contemporary artist)
Haruko Matsunaga (Representative, KnK International)
Yayoi Yamazaki (Arabic interpreter, archaeologist, Founder of Ibra wa Khayt)
- Moderator: Daisuke Furuta (Founding Editor, BuzzFeed Japan)

3:50PM **Closing remarks**

■ About JPF×ART

JPF×ART is a project that hopes to raise awareness of the refugee issue among people in Japan who are often distanced from these issues, and lead them to see it as their own problem and think deeply about it. To achieve this, JPF sought the cooperation of Nara, who continues to inspire fans around the world through his artwork and messages related to social issues. This project also strives to contribute to the creation of artwork by socially conscious artists.

Nara shared the experiences of his visit to Jordan in real-time through [his Twitter account](#)*2 and has continued to do so since returning to Japan. Details of his visit are also updated and shared on the [dedicated website for JPF×ART](#) as well as social media including [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

*2: Due to JPF's safety guidelines, no public announcements could be made before or during the visit. For the aim of this project, JPF allowed Nara to tweet about his experiences in real-time under the condition of not specifying the time or location.

■ About JPF

JPF was founded in 2000 as a new and uniquely Japanese framework for emergency humanitarian assistance. In order to deliver prompt and effective assistance within and outside of Japan, JPF coordinates the efforts of NGOs, the business community, and the government, all of which participate as equal partners, and provides various types of support to member NGOs in Japan. Since 2000, we have built out trust through over 1,400 projects in 47 nations and regions totaling over 54 billion yen in assistance as we promote cooperation among corporate partners and NGOs and accurately report our activities. We share information and create humanitarian assistance projects together with our 43 member NGOs with diverse strengths. After the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, over 7 billion yen had been provided from corporate and individual donors for disaster relief, and we partnered with locally-coordinating intermediary support organizations in providing assistance for local NGOs and contributed to the systemic development towards reconstruction.

■ Media Contact:

Tomoya Nishikawa/Keiko Nomunra

Kyodo News Digital

Email: presstour-inquiry@kyodo-d.jp Tel: 03-6252-6402 Fax: 03-6252-6411