

アートと娯楽のボーダーを超えて



# Kumiko Ueda

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website:<http://www.kumikoueda.com/>

Born in Nara Prefecture. After completing a Master's program in French Literature at the Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University, and working in a general company, joined the Takarazuka Revue's directing department. Gained support by balancing profound themes and entertainment in original plays but resigned in 2022. In the same year, nominated for the Kishida Kunio Drama Award with the spectacular reading "Biome," which depicted a dual structure of human drama and the plant world. In 2023, directed opera for the first time in the nationwide co-production opera series "Pagliacci" and "Cavalleria Rusticana." The direction, which included subtitles in Kansai dialect and reimagined the scenes of 19th-century Italian commoners in the context of modern Japanese poverty, became a topic of discussion. From March 2023 to March 2024, undertook training in France under the Agency for Cultural Affairs' overseas training program for emerging artists. In March 2024, established her own company, projectumī (a voluntary organization). After returning to Japan, she will reside in Nara, with the company based in both Kansai and Tokyo. From 2024, she has been selected as a Saison Fellow II.

## Awards/Nominations

2015: Yomiuri Theater Awards, Excellent Director Award (for the direction of Takarazuka Revue's Snow Troupe's "Hoshiai Hitoyo")  
2014: Nominated for the Tsuruya Nanboku Drama Award (for the script of Takarazuka Revue's Cosmos Troupe's "Tsubasa Aru Hitobito")  
2021: Nominated for the Tsuruya Nanboku Drama Award (for the script of Takarazuka Revue's Moon Troupe's "Sakura Ranbu Ki")  
2022: Nominated for the Kishida Kunio Playwriting Award (for the script of the spectacle reading "Biome")

## Grant

2024-2028 Saison Fellow II

## Performances

### Upcoming:

- January 24 - February 3, 2025: Projectumī Independent Performance "Banquet on Loneliness" at Kamata Onsen Grand Banquet Hall
- August 2 - August 16, 2024: KIAC Artist in Residence "Project Pneuma" at Kinosaki International Arts Center

### Past:

- March 3 & 5, 2023: Theater Opera "Pagliacci/Cavalleria Rusticana" at Aichi Prefectural Arts Theater Grand Hall
- February 3 & 5, 2023: Theater Opera "Pagliacci/Cavalleria Rusticana" at Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre Concert Hall
- June 8 - June 12, 2022: Spectacle Reading "Biome" at Tokyo Tatemono Brillia HALL
- July 10 - August 15, 2021: Moon Troupe Tokyo Takarazuka Theater Performance "Sakura Ranbu Ki" at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater
- May 15 - June 21, 2021: Moon Troupe Grand Theater Performance "Sakura Ranbu Ki" at Takarazuka Grand Theater
- February 26 - April 11, 2021: Snow Troupe Tokyo Takarazuka Theater Performance "fff – Fortississimo –" at Tokyo Takarazuka Theater
- January 1 - February 8, 2021: Snow Troupe Grand Theater Performance "fff – Fortississimo –" at Takarazuka Grand Theater
- August 1 - August 11, 2020: Cosmos Troupe Performance "FLYING SAPA" at Nissay Theater
- September 6 - September 15, 2020: Cosmos Troupe Performance "FLYING SAPA" at Umeda Arts Theater

# STATEMENT

Once, I was almost killed by a stranger on a night street in a desert town. After narrowly escaping, my daily life changed from the scenes through the glass of a shaking bus to vivid and intense experiences like being thrown off the bus and walking under the scorching sun. The green of the leaves was a color that could not yet be named green, the taste of food was complex, and my sexual desire returned. For me, the function of theater and art is to bring about a similar change in the viewer (safely!). Rather than providing an interpretation of the world, it throws us into an uncharted world.

In modern commercial theaters, their function is to provide "stories" that give meaning to the otherwise aimless time of individuals in a society where the presence of religion and survival instincts has faded, forming an audience community. However, this differs from the joy of theater that I seek. After retiring from the Takarazuka Revue, I have been exploring ways to access the uncharted world myself and means to project it to others. I am interested in visualizing the possibility that something invisible overlaps with the familiar world, or in viewing the familiar world of human drama from a perspective that includes nature and the cosmos on a different scale.

Thus, rather than entertainment, I aim to share performing arts with critical perspectives with a wide range of citizens, which is why I retired from the Takarazuka Revue and established my own group, projectumī.

Leveraging my skills in directing to convey complex themes in an easily understandable way and attracting the audience, I now seek to handle themes with high criticality, creating works that bridge the gap between avant-garde pieces favored by a small audience and popular entertainment. By producing works that are accessible to everyone and deeply share contemporary issues, I aim to further develop the role of art in society as a refuge, a place of learning, and a space for play for a broader audience.

We have established a creative system with harassment prevention measures by experts, exploring better collaboration and group creation methods.