

MONEX GROUP

THE 19th ART IN THE OFFICE 2026 Winning Artwork Completed

Tokyo, July 30th, 2026 – Monex Group, Inc. (headquarters: Minato-ku, Tokyo; Representative Executive Officer & CEO: Yuko Seimei) is pleased to announce the selection and completion of “Let's Have an Idle Talk (The Tree of Conversation)” by Kaede Fujimoto from among 121 entries for the ART IN THE OFFICE 2026 award, which is part of the company’s social contribution and employee awareness program.

Ms. Fujimoto focused on the value of idle talk, proposing a work that visually expresses how dialogue expands and how conversation branches off from its original topic by likening it to the branching of a tree. In the selection process, the judges acclaimed the proposal for making use of the characteristics of the conference room space and placing dialogue with employees at the core of the creative process. It was recognized for shedding light on exchanges that are often overlooked or forgotten in everyday life. In addition, the idea was praised for highlighting the value of dialogue, which can easily be regarded as wasteful in today’s society where efficiency is increasingly emphasized due to the rapid advancement and spread of AI technologies, and for reminding viewers of the richness of human interaction.

The completed work, created through a five-day residency, consists of five panels that represent a record of each production day from Day 1 to Day 5, arranged from left to right. The process of daily conversations with employees branching out is represented visually, and the traces of idle talk exchanged during the residency are embedded throughout the artwork.

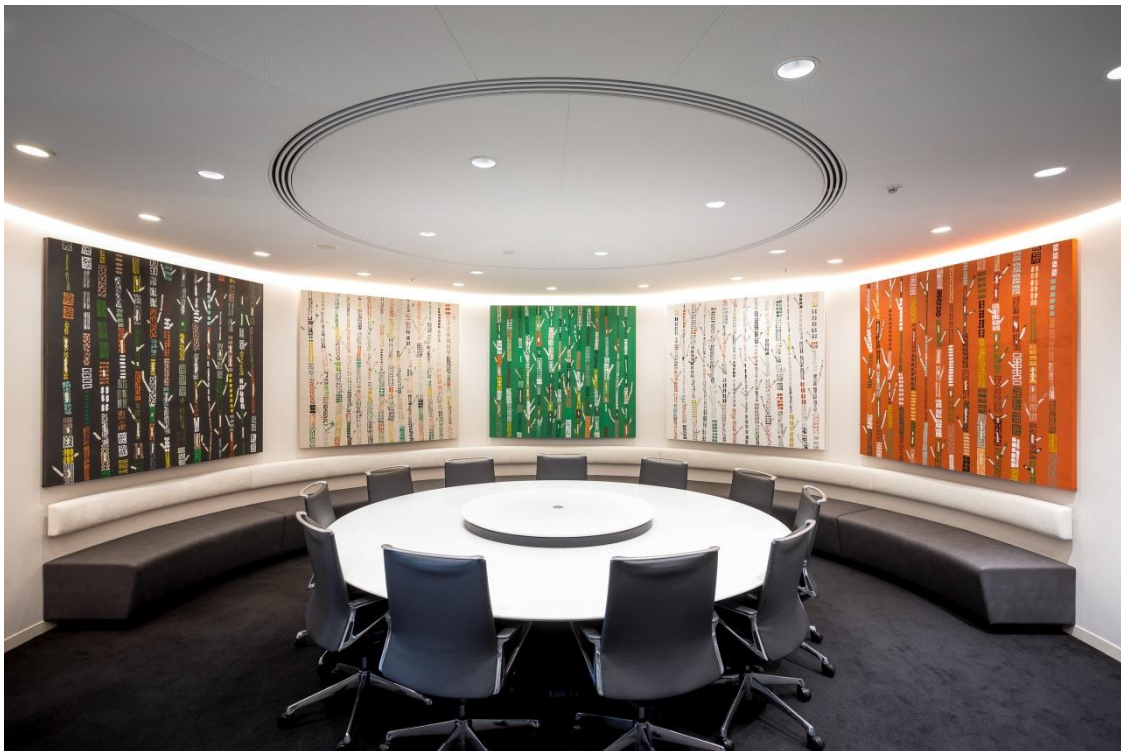


Photo: Monex Group, Inc. Press Room (GALAXY)

ART IN THE OFFICE 2026 work / Kaede Fujimoto / “Let's Have an Idle Talk (The Tree of Conversation)” / 2026 / Wood, cheesecloth, gauze, paper, acrylic, ink/ Width 10000× Height 1550 (mm), Dimensions variable

ART IN THE OFFICE is a program to support up-and-coming contemporary artists by creating opportunities to display their work. With a desire to advance contemporary art’s pursuit of new forms of expression and focus on various societal issues, this program was started in 2008 and is operated with the cooperation of Arts Initiative Tokyo (AIT), a non-profit organization. In addition to providing opportunities for winning artists to further succeed in their field, the program seeks to inspire employees through their interactions with artists to acknowledge different values and ideas as they discover new perspectives. In 2025, ART IN THE OFFICE received the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs Award in recognition of its contribution to the promotion of contemporary art.

As in our corporate philosophy, always a step ahead of the “Y” in “MONEY,” we at MONEX will continue to explore ways to embrace all people who are engaged at the forefront of our future.

◆Winning Artist and Artwork

Profile of Kaede Fujimoto

Title of the Work: “Let’s Have an Idle Talk (The Tree of Conversation)”



Born in 2000, Kaede Fujimoto graduated from the Department of Design, Faculty of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts, in 2026, and is currently enrolled in their master’s program. Through observations of everyday life, she explores the richness found in ambiguous, trivial, seemingly useless, or excessive things—elements that are “neither necessary nor unnecessary” and gradually being filtered out of contemporary society. She seeks to uncover the subtle and often overlooked appeal hidden within them and translate it into her work. Her major exhibitions include “Small Island Anchorage” (2024, haco-art brewing gallery), “Aochan and Kaechan: On Blue and Green” (2024, ART・IN・GALLERY), and “Living Things: New Possibilities through Print” (2025, BAG-Brillia Art Gallery). Her works have also appeared in the media, including the cover illustration for *Seishun to Dokusho*, an information magazine about reading published by Shueisha (2024), and in-site graphics for issues 12 and 13 of the web media 24M (2025). Working across various media, Fujimoto aspires to create something that is neither hostile nor friendly, neither cold nor warm, yet somehow comforting—like the lukewarm wind that blows strongly before a typhoon.

Comments from Kaede Fujimoto:

In everyday conversations, topics sometimes gradually drift away from the original subject as we continue talking. Idle talk is often seen as something unnecessary, but I wanted to value the new discoveries and unexpected connections that emerge from such detours. In this work, I likened the expansion of such conversations to the branching of a tree. I attempted to capture, by hand, the moments when topics that caught my attention developed in a different direction, and to visualize the relationships that emerged from them.

During the residency, I was impressed to see people who came to have idle talk with me looking at fragments of other people’s idle talk already drawn on the canvas and wondering, “What were they talking about?” There were also moments when new conversations emerged from someone else’s fragment of conversation, such as, “This must be something that so-and-so said,” or “That does sound like something I would say, but it wasn’t me.” I was happy to feel that the work itself had become a catalyst for generating idle talk.

Idle talk always begins suddenly, and its content is rarely shared or recorded in any official way. It seems to be something whose flow can only be experienced by those who happen to be there at that moment. By fixing it in a visible form through this work, an experience was created in which people with no direct connection to the original conversation could encounter fragments and flows of someone else’s idle talk and imagine the circumstances behind them. Someone’s idle talk gives rise to new idle talk in an unexpected place. I was able to glimpse exactly the kind of leaps in conversation that I had hoped for.

I find it interesting to imagine the course of other people’s conversations. If you have a chance to stop by the Press Room, please pause for a moment, come closer, read the words, and imagine how each word came to appear there.

◆About the selection of the winner

ART IN THE OFFICE support:

One person (or one group) selected among entries submitted by publicly recruited participants is provided space to exhibit the winning work in the company’s Press Room for approximately one year. The selected artist will receive ¥500,000 in prize money as well as ¥500,000 to cover production costs. In addition, the winning artwork will appear on the company’s integrated report and other materials and used for original novelty goods.

In 2019, ART IN THE OFFICE was selected for This is MECENAT 2019, a certification system of the Association for Corporate Support of the Arts. In 2012, the program received the 2012 Good Design Award (G-Mark System) from the Japan Institute of Design Promotion.

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Selection criteria:

- Artists in the contemporary art field (students permitted)
- A unique and innovative work that reflects an understanding of the characteristics of the Press Room
- The artwork needs to incorporate Monex Group's corporate philosophy of "embracing people who are engaged at the forefront of the future"

Judges (alphabetical order):

Soi Kobori (The eldest son of the 13th Grand Master of the Enshu Sado School)

Mika Kuraya (Director, Yokohama Museum of Art)

Oki Matsumoto (Chairman of the Board, Monex Group, Inc.)

Kotaro Nukaga (Director, Founder, KOTARO NUKAGA)

Yuko Shiomi (Director, Arts Initiative Tokyo)

Monex Group ART IN THE OFFICE website:

https://www.monexgroup.jp/en/sustainability/art_in_the_office.html

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