

MISA SHIN GALLERY

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Press Release
January 2026

上原沙也加 Uehara Sayaka *The Shore Before*

January 31 - February 28, 2026

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 31, 17:00-19:00

Tuesday - Saturday 12:00-19:00 (Closed on Mon, Sun, Public holidays)



Uehara Sayaka "The Shore Before", 2025, Archival pigment print, Image size 50 x 70 cm, Sheet size 59.4 x 84.1 cm

Bright red Coca-Cola parasols stood on Tokashiku Beach.

MISA SHIN GALLERY is pleased to present *Mae no hama (The Shore Before)*, a solo exhibition by Uehara Sayaka, on view from January 31 to February 28, 2026. This exhibition introduces a new body of work in conjunction with Uehara's first solo exhibition at a public art institution, *Even If All the Ruins Were Swept Away without a Trace*, which opens on January 24, 2026 at Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino.

Mae no hama (The Shore Before) is a series of black-and-white photographs documenting a short journey Uehara undertook over several days, including June 23, Okinawa's Memorial Day.

On this date, when commemorative ceremonies are held at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman City, southern Okinawa Island, regarded as the site marking the *end* of the Battle of Okinawa, Uehara deliberately travels in reverse, toward the shoreline where U.S. forces first landed and where the battle is considered to have *begun*. This act is not merely a revisiting of historical trauma as something confined to the past; rather, it visually interrogates how the wounds of the Battle of Okinawa continue to transform and exert their influence into the present.

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The series begins with scenes of morning light in the artist's own room, then traces a journey through Naha Port and onward by ferry to Tokashiki Island in the Kerama Islands, scattered west of Okinawa Island. Walking through villages and beaches, Uehara follows the traces of war through monuments such as the *Arirang Memorial Monument*, *Site of Civilian Mass Suicide*, and the *Monument to the Interned Villagers of Ie*. On June 23, she arrives at *Mae-nu-hama* (*Mae no Hama/the shore before*) on Aka Island. There, Kerama deer, an introduced species from Satsuma, wander calmly through the village, creating a quiet intersection where history and the present moment gently overlap.



Uehara Sayaka "The Shore Before", 2025, Archival pigment print, Image size 34 x 51 cm, Sheet size 42 x 59.1 cm

The cat is always gazing out the window.

After returning to Okinawa Island, the artist passes expansive U.S. military bases and heads toward a shopping mall overlooking the western coast of Urasoe City, a planned relocation site for a military port. As she watches the sunset and photographs the lights of the city at night, she travels south along National Route 58, passes near a Self-Defense Forces base, and eventually returns once more to her own room.

The word "*Mae*" (before/in front of) in the title *Mae no Hama* (*The Shore Before*) does not refer solely to spatial orientation. It also evokes the temporality inherent in photography itself—as a medium that functions as an apparatus for attesting to the existence of the past. The photographs taken over the course of several days carefully gather traces of cruelty and subtle signs of instability, coalescing into an action that oscillates like waves between past and present, private space and island landscapes, the living and the dead.

This work consists of approximately 200 photographs accompanied by captions. At Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino, the series is presented in a slideshow format alongside representative works from earlier periods, offering a diachronic overview of Uehara's practice. At MISA SHIN GALLERY, a selection of prints chosen by the artist is exhibited, creating a space that invites close, contemplative engagement with each individual photograph. By presenting the same series through different formats, the two venues together open the work to multilayered interpretations.

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Uehara Sayaka "The Shore Before", 2025, Archival pigment print, Image size 34 x 51 cm, Sheet size 42 x 59.1 cm

From the return ferry, I saw the shadows of islands stretching one after another.

An opening reception with the artist will be held on Saturday, January 31.

We warmly invite you to join us.

Uehara Sayaka

Born in 1993 in Okinawa, where she currently lives and works. Uehara's photographic practice explores memories and wounds that surface within landscapes, as well as the layered temporalities held by places and objects. In 2020, she received the New Photography Award at 36th Higashikawa Award for her series *The Others*. She was awarded both the Encouragement Prize and the Ohara Museum of Art Prize at VOCA 2024. In 2022, she published her photobook *Sleeping Tree* with from the AKAAKA Art Publishing Inc. Her major solo exhibitions include *The Others* (Canon Open Gallery 1, Tokyo, 2019), *The Others* (INTERFACE-Shomei Tomatsu Lab., Okinawa, 2019), *Green Rooms* (MISA SHIN GALLERY, Tokyo, 2024), and *Green Rooms: Island of Peace* (Gallery Atos, Okinawa, 2025). Selected group exhibitions include *Paradise Okinawa* (MISA SHIN GALLERY, Tokyo, 2022), *VOCA 2024: The Vision of Contemporary Art* (The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, 2024), and *30th Anniversary Exhibition: Choreography of the Everyday* (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2025). From January 24, 2026, Uehara will present her first solo exhibition at a public art institution, *Even If All the Ruins Were Swept Away without a Trace*, at Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino.

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Access

Route by subway:

12 minutes' walk via Nanbu-zaka from Hiroo Station on the Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line.

15 minutes' walk via Rakuen-zaka from Shirokane-takanawa Station on the Tokyo Metro Namboku/Mita Line

16 minutes' walk via Sendai-zaka from Azabu-juban Station on the Tokyo Metro Namboku Line/Toei Oedo Line

Route by bus:

3 minutes' walk after getting off at Sendaizaka-Ue on the Toei-Bus [橋 86].

3 minutes' walk after getting off at Sendaizaka-Ue on Chii-Bus, Azabu-West route.

(Hiroo Station ~ Azabu-Juban Station ~ Roppongi-Keyakizaka ~ Hiroo Station)

MAP



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