

## Call for Application

The Research Institute for Folk Tools, Art and Archives (Mingu Lab) is pleased to announce an open call for research projects on folk tools, art and archives, focusing mainly on the collections of Michio Aburaya.

### 1. Background

The Institute for Research on Folk Tools, Art and Archives (Mingu Lab) is pleased to announce an open call for research projects on folk tools, art and archives, focusing primarily on the collections of Michio Aburaya. Mingu Lab is a project of researchers, artists, and volunteers who study and examine folk tools and art archives through experimentation, observation, and dialogue.

Since FY2024, researchers, artists, and volunteers have been working on the “1/1000 Aburaya Collection,” a project to classify, organize, verify, and record the value of over 500,000 pieces of folk art objects collected by collector Michio Aburaya (born in 1934 and currently resides in Akita City). In fiscal year 2025, we plan to launch the “Research Institute for Folk Tools, Art, and Archives (Mingu Lab)” led by people involved in the project, invite a wide range of participants, and conduct empirical research for preservation, inheritance, and utilization of the collection.

### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this project is to promote empirical research on the preservation, inheritance, and utilization of folk tools and other artifacts as creative resources through the development of a platform and programs for their preservation, inheritance, and utilization, and to convey the outcomes to society at large.

### 3. Project Outline

#### 3-1. Outline

We are looking for research projects using folk tools and other items collected by Michio Aburaya over the past 75 years, using the Akita Culture Creation Center as a base during the “Classification and Arrangement Activities”. The content of the research can be of any genre or format, as long as it is related to the preservation, documentation, and utilization of Aburaya’s collection.

#### 3-2. Duration of “Classification and Arrangement Activities”

August 3 - August 25, 2025

Dates	Program	Venues
August 3	Packing of Aburaya’s collection in the storage	Aburaya’s warehouse
August 4	Unpacking	Cultural Creation Center
August 6 - August 22	Classification, recording and research activities	Cultural Creation Center
August 23	Presentation/Talk event	Cultural Creation Center

August 24	Packing of aburaya's collection	Cultural Creation Center
August 25	Unpacking	Aburaya's warehouse

4. Michio Aburaya's collection

- The collection focuses on items that common people actually used in their daily lives from the Meiji to Heisei periods;
- The collection covers an extremely wide range of objects, including farm tools, works of art, books, toys, food packages, bromides, billboards and advertisements, and personal diaries and letters. Furthermore, most of them are stored in warehouses, unorganized and unclassified;
- Most of the information about the usage and history of the collected items is not recorded and only relies on Aburaya's memory; and
- The collection is stored mainly in warehouses in various locations in Akita Prefecture, but the environment is not conducive, and many of the objects are deteriorating.

\*For an overview of the collections, see Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/aburaya.aca/>

5. Eligibility and Conditions

- (1) The project must meet the purpose of this open call;
- (2) Applicants must be able to carry out research independently;
- (3) Applicants must be able to communicate and coordinate in Japanese;
- (4) Be in good physical and mental health;
- (5) Do NOT disturb public order and morals;
- (6) Treat Mitsuo Aburaya and his collection with respect, and not damage, dispose of, destroy, or remove without his permission;
- (7) To abide by the rules and regulations regarding the use of the facilities of the Akita Culture Creation Center; and
- (8) Possess a valid bank account in Japan to receive the research grant.

We welcome applications from researchers and students who are not affiliated with a university or other research institution.

Applications can be submitted by individuals or groups. Groups may apply as long as one member of the group who will serve as the contact person with the organizer meets the above conditions (2) and (7).

6. Details of support for research activities

(1) Space for research activities

During the implementation period of 3.(2) above, a space of "Studio A1" on the 2nd floor of the Akita Culture Creation Center will be provided free of charge.

The center is open from 9:00am to 9:00pm (closed on Tuesdays).

Free wifi, printer, and scanner will be available.

(2) Provide opportunities to present research processes and results through bulletins and presentations

A research bulletin will be published by the end of March 2026.

(3) During the implementation period of 3.(2) above, we will hold presentations/talk event on the research process and/or results.

(3) Provide opportunities to practice research using Aburaya's collection

You can participate in an inspection tour of Aburayai's warehouse.

(4) Research grants

A research grant of 10,000 yen (tax included) will be provided for each research project.

7. How to apply

Please fill in the form online.

<https://forms.gle/grpegTrdTs3F6Fyb6>

8. Deadline for application

Friday, June 13, 2025 11:59pm(JST)

9. Notes

(1) The name of the applicant/organization, the title and outline of the research project, and photos/videos of the research activities may be published online and printed materials such as research bulletins.

(2) The applicant is requested to make a presentation at the presentation/talk event to be held during the period described in 3.(2) above, or submit a paper after the completion of the research activities (participation in both is acceptable). The contents of the presentations and reports will be published online and/or on printed materials.

(3) If the research project to which you have applied is planned or scheduled to be continued in the future, the Institute may discuss the possibility of collaboration.

(4) Personal information submitted by applicants will be used solely for the purpose of carrying out the research project (except in cases where the applicant has given his/her consent).

10. Selection Process

We plan to accept all submitted proposals, except those that do not meet the qualifications and conditions for application. However, if the number of applications is extremely large and it is deemed impossible to accept all of them in consideration of the size of the venue and the period of implementation, etc., Mr. Aburaya and the organizer may consult with each other to narrow down the number of applications to be accepted.

In such a case, we will notify you of the result by Friday, June 20.

11. Inquiry

Arts Center Akita (person-in-charge: Mitomi/Iwane)

Atelier Momosada, 12-3 Arayaokawa-machi, Akita, 010-1632 Japan

TEL 018-888-8137 FAX 018-888-8147

E-mail [research@artscenter-akita.jp](mailto:research@artscenter-akita.jp)