

Roundtable #21:

“Reducing plastic waste by upcycling Japan’s abundance of umbrellas” with Aki Saito

The Japan Times Cube Inc. (representative director: Minako Suematsu) launched Roundtable by The Japan Times, a series of talk events broadcasted in Japan.

The English-language events invites readers of The Japan Times to be guest speakers. Ross Rowbury, a Senior Managing Director at Nomura Holdings, who has a deep knowledge of Japan and boasts a wide network both domestically and abroad, sits down in the role of host with Japanese and non-Japanese to discuss their lives in Japan. The Roundtable is held once a month.

For our special speaker, Mr. Rowbury will welcome Aki Saito, a Japanese designer and founder of PLASTICITY, a brand that upcycles used plastic umbrellas into bags.

<Overview>

Date and time: Tuesday, July 5, 2022
14:30 to 15:30 JST: Talk session

Registration at: <https://peatix.com/event/3279692/>

Participants: This event is a recording and not a livestream. A notification will be sent to participants when the recording is posted online.

Registration fee: Free

The contents of Roundtable by The Japan Times will be published as an archive at a later date and will be introduced in the main paper of The Japan Times and the website of Sustainable Japan by The Japan Times. Roundtable is held in cooperation with Nomura Holdings.

Aki Saito

Aki Saito is a Japanese designer and the founder of PLASTICITY.

After having spent most of her life in multicultural environments, she returned to Tokyo to start her career. Living and working in one of the most convenient cities in the world, Ms. Saito came to the conclusion that convenience is not always enriching, especially when it is creating a lot of waste. Her passion to create, and love for nature, inspired her to pursue bag-making at school, with the goal to create a line of environment-friendly fashion products.



PLASTICITY, a project presented in 2019 during her studies at school, officially debuted as a brand in 2020, in collaboration with Mondo Design Co., Ltd. PLASTICITY upcycles used plastic umbrellas into bags, incorporating rust stains and marks left from the umbrellas. The unique material developed by PLASTICITY not only tells a visual story of the umbrella’s ‘past’, but also adds uniqueness and a one-of-a-kind design to each item. Ms. Saito hopes the brand can help with the reduction of plastic waste, and more importantly, inspire others to act, produce and consume in ways that are kinder and more sustainable for the planet.

Ross Rowbury

Ross Rowbury is a Senior Managing Director and Co-Head of Group Corporate Communications at Nomura Holdings. He has observed Japan while living and working here for four decades. Commencing his career in finance in Tokyo during the early 1980s, he later moved into public relations and communications, holding senior positions at Gavin Anderson & Co. (now Kreab) and PRAP Japan. He headed the Edelman business in Japan for 10 years until July 2020. Prior to joining Nomura in October, he was a freelance consultant to a number of firms on their Japan business strategy. He is also a visiting professor of Asian marketing at Doshisha University in Kyoto and is on the Board of TELL, a suicide prevention and mental health NPO.



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