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NEWS

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# Tokyo Artist Group Changes Name in Protest

BY PAMELA WONG

ChimPom  
from Smappa! Group

Image via CHIM-POM's announcement. Courtesy the artists.

The Tokyo six-member artist collective Chim ↑ Pom announced in a statement on April 19 that they will change their name to “Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group,” effective April 27, which is the opening date of their [upcoming exhibition](#) at the Tokyo gallery Anomaly. The decision was made to decry “discrimination against nightlife workers” at the group’s ongoing survey “Happy Spring” at Tokyo’s Mori Art Museum, which rejected a company’s offer of sponsorship for reasons related to the museum’s branding and public image.

According to Chim ↑ Pom's statement, the group collected sponsorship from multiple companies to cover the cost of installation and several other items for their show "[Happy Spring](#)." The offer by Smappa!Group, a company that runs nightclubs in Shinjuku, however, was rejected by the Mori Art Museum. While the group negotiated with the museum for a solution, they were told that the rejection was made for: "'branding' in the context of the 'community development' represented by Roppongi Hills, and that Mori Art Museum was the very face of [the] Hills area as a 'cultural city.'" The museum later also told the artists that they "would not display the logo of a company that was in the nightlife business."

The Mori Art Museum is located on the upper floors of the 54-story Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, the sixth-tallest building in Tokyo. It is the anchor development within the Mori Building company's urban development district known as Roppongi Hills, which encompasses residential buildings, shopping districts, entertainment venues, and parks.

Smappa!Group has previously supported and collaborated with Chim ↑ Pom on a number of projects, including the public demonstration LOVE IS OVER (2014); the scrap-and-build project So see you again tomorrow, too? (2016); and the pop-up eatery and performance venue, Ningen Restaurant (2018). Founded in 2004, Smappa!Group is owned by Maki Tezuka, who is also Chim ↑ Pom member Ellie's husband. Located in Tokyo's nightlife district Kabukicho, the corporation runs businesses and stores, including host clubs—a specific type of night club in Japan that employs male staff and caters to women customers—as well as restaurants, care facilities, beauty salons, the bar and gallery Decameron, and the now-defunct first-ever Kabukicho Book Center.

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GPO Box 10084  
Hong Kong

[info@aapmag.com](mailto:info@aapmag.com)

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