



DIOR

AVAILABLE ON DIOR.COM

Sponsored Ad

How Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group Ellie's dramatic life events intersect with the turbulent times of today Reflecting on the large-scale Chim ↑ Pom retrospective and Ellie's debut essay

2022-05-26

Toshie Tanaka

ART #DARE

Ellie is part of the art collective Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group. Their large-scale retrospective “Happy Spring” is currently on display at the Mori Museum. Ellie reflects on these turbulent couple years of the pandemic, in which she also gave birth and wrote her first novel.

“Happy Spring”, a large-scale retrospective by art collective Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group on display at the Mori Museum, opened in February of this year. Ellie, a member of Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!, published her debut essay, *Hai, Konichiwa*, that same month. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Tokyo Olympics postponement and opening, giving birth, and the opening of the retrospective all coincided... a near impossible coincidence. I talked to Ellie about the past two years that were filled with miraculously timed events

This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK



This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK



Sponsored Ad

Dramatic events don't feel over-the-top due to Ellie's truth-seeking personality

“The editor at Shinchosha (my publisher) asked me to fill out a survey, which is what started this essay series. It began because of my editor, but I've always felt like words, writing and footage have coursed through my body. This was my first experience writing, but in retrospect, it was as if the words in my body were being automatically written. If I hadn't written them out, the words would just have continued to flow through my body. I was fortunate to have been able to put my thoughts down on paper for this series”.

This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK

combining their deep understanding of social issues through their creative project at the time, the passage also describes that this new exhibition space was a source of inspiration for them because it was once a burial ground for cholera victims. Taking on subjects such as capitalism, consumerism, and poverty in their art, in the space where epidemic victims are buried, in the country where the Industrial Revolution started, is very on brand for Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!. But it's odd to see Ellie, who has been taking up similar creative projects for a while, start something that seemed to foreshadow the present. In the midst of her first experience with "endless deadlines", she documents her experiences with pregnancy and childbirth, all while chaos ensues around the world in the form of a pandemic. Being able to read about such a journey is rare. But these dramatic events don't feel so over-the-top since Ellie strives to capture realism.

"Writing is fun, or more like something I feel like I must do. I want to put my whole self into my writing, which was something that was really important to me. I edited out some parts that didn't feel like I had put my all into it. When I'm writing well, it feels like stream-of-consciousness. I was writing while immersed in that world.

I knew I wanted to write about childbirth, so I jotted some things down in the hospital before I forgot, and wrote and sent in the piece within ten days of giving birth. I can't even remember what happened at this point, but not just about giving birth. There are multiple instances where I've read the book back and thought, 'oh, I didn't know this happened'. I used to drink a lot of alcohol before I got pregnant, and my lifestyle for almost twenty years was staying up until the crack of dawn. That changed drastically while I was writing this book. So perhaps in that way, I was documenting my own changes".



This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK



Sponsored Ad

“There’s a difference between using your imagination and lying. I want to try my hand at lying from now on”

The collective Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa! is made up of six members, including Ellie. The members’ ideas are also included in her book. There are Bible quotes in this book because the Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa! members thought Ellie’s regular use of biblical references was interesting.

“When we were in Manchester in 2019, I told the members about a literary series I was

This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK

literary magazine, so I wanted to build off of something. As I was thinking of how I would do that, I thought something familiar would be best, so I chose the Bible”.

Ellie went to Catholic school for fourteen years from kindergarten to high school, so the Bible was always around since she was little. Her Catholic school background has influenced her work and is connected to her established literary style. Some pieces in the retrospective have been based on this book, as well.

“When I first told the members I was going to start an essay series, they told me that they knew I would do something like this, because they know me well. The exhibit includes a sound installation in which I read excerpts from the book that the members chose. We were actually unsure if this exhibition was going to happen until a little bit ago. Something occurred, and Roppongi Hills asked us not to display a piece that was part of the show. We discussed how this was a violation of our freedom of speech with the museum, and the show got postponed twice. That’s why this time around, everything felt more challenging. I really like my art to be involved in society, and I like to create works based on societal issues. If you take advantage of a space like Roppongi Hills, there are plenty of things that could only work there. I only do what I do from an artistic perspective. Don’t forget that we must face art professionally, and that we merely assume that art loves us”.



Sponsored Ad

Since they started the collective in 2005, Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa! has confronted countless social issues of the times through a variety of mediums. And that hasn't changed. But Ellie is personally tackling new writing endeavors.

"I just started writing a fiction series. I used to think I could never write from a man's lens, but here I am writing from the perspective of men and women of all ages, and even from a mouse's point of view. It's like you're looking at a ball in your hand from different perspectives and putting it straight to writing. When my editor told me to 'learn how to lie', I thought that was such refreshing advice. I didn't really lie before, but I realized that I'm able to do that now. You can't lie when writing essays because it involves other people. But once

This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK

hand at lying from now on. There are people who are really good at lying, it comes naturally. I think that's impressive. I guess that's why we have to be careful”.



Ellie

In 2005, She formed the art collective “Chim ↑ Pom” with Ryuta Ushiro, Yasutaka Hayashi, Masataka Okada, Motomu Inaoka, and Toshinori Mizuno. While dealing with social themes such as urban problems, nuclear accidents, and immigration, they continue to present works with a strong message in pursuit of reality. They have been active internationally, participating in biennials in various countries. Currently, “Chim ↑ Pom Exhibition: Happy Spring” is being held at Mori Art Museum.

chimpom.jp

Twitter : [@ellieille](https://twitter.com/ellieille)

Instagram : [@elliechimpom](https://www.instagram.com/elliechimpom)

Photography Kunihisa Kobayashi

Translation Mimiko Goldstein

はい、こんにちは

エリイ

Chim → Pom エリイの

生活と意見

新潮社

This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK

new human from her womb. She now sees the light of the world. A vivid document of the artist's one and only experience, captured in vibrant words. ¥1,980

■ Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa! Exhibit: Happy Spring

Period: 2/18/2022 – 5/29/2022

Venue: Mori Art Museum

Address: 10-1 Roppongi 6-Chome Minato City, Tokyo, Roppongi Hills Mori Tower

Hours of Operation: Mondays, Wednesdays through Sundays 10 am to 10 pm (last entry 9:30 pm)

Tuesdays 10 am to 5 pm (last entry 4:30 pm)

Admission:

[Weekdays]

Adults 1,800 yen (online tickets: 1,600 yen)

Students* (University/High School) 1,200 yen (online: 1,100 yen)

Children* (Age 4 through Junior High School Students) 600 yen (online: 500 yen)

Seniors* (Ages 65 and over) 1,500 yen (online: 1,300 yen)

[Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays]

Adults 2,000 yen (online: 1,800 yen)

Students* (University/High School) 1,300 yen (online: 1,200 yen)

Children* (Age 4 through Junior High School Students) 700 yen (online: 600 yen)

Seniors* (Ages 65 and over) 1,700 yen (online: 1,500 yen)

*Purchase tickets with the audio guide included online or day-of (+500 yen)

Official website: <https://www.mori.art.museum/jp/exhibitions/chimpom/>

tags:

Chim ↑ Pom from Smappa!Group

Interview

author:

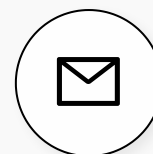
Toshie Tanaka

Editor and writer. She is the leader of "KIMITERASU," which advocates the evolution of journalists. She is the co-author of "Mito Araki". and also the editor of "Tabisurushitagokoro" (Shinya Shirasu) and "Anju and Zushi-oo" (Shuichi Yoshida).Her life's work is to be a bridge between Japan and Bhutan.[KIMITERASU](#)



◀ See Toshie Tanaka's other articles

SHARE THIS



This site uses advertising cookies, including third party cookies, to help us serve you better. By clicking "OK" or continuing to browse, you are agreeing to [our cookie policy](#).

OK