

## **Nabtesco Provides Support for Artist Mari Katayama's High Heel Project**

Nabtesco Corporation (headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo; President & CEO: Kazumasa Kimura) hereby announces that it has concluded an agreement to support the High Heel Project implemented by Artist Mari Katayama.

Mari Katayama is an internationally renowned artist known for her photographic self-portraits created in an elaborate manner by using hand-sewn objects and other items to decorate herself, which have exhibited at the Venice Biennale and various museums including Tate Modern in London. The High Heel Project is produced by Mari Katayama, who lives with prosthetic legs, to create high heels and prosthetic legs that allow her to wear high heels with the help of partner companies, and perform on stage in live shows. This project aims to demonstrate the "freedom of choice" and "freedom to embrace ideals" that allow all people, including prosthetic leg users, to dress freely and choose how they will behave in society.

Nabtesco has been supplying its unique welfare equipment to contribute to increasing the comfort of transportation and living spaces. Since developing the world's first electronically controlled prosthetic knee joints in 1993, the company has been working to develop and offer prosthetic legs that users can wear with a sense of security. Based on the agreement concluded for the High Heel Project, Nabtesco will provide Mari Katayama with its leading-edge electronically controlled prosthetic knee joints, named "ALLUX2," and Mari Katayama will provide feedback on the joints from a user viewpoint. The two parties will collaborate to develop public relations activities.

Nabtesco, as one of its initiatives to solve social challenges through its business, supports the realization of normalization, which enables the elderly and people with disabilities participate in society in their own way. By implementing various initiatives, including supporting High Heel Project, Nabtesco will continue to contribute to solutions for social challenges.



Daisuke Hakoda, President of the Accessibility Innovations Company, Nabtesco Corporation (left) and Ms. Mari Katayama (right), who signed the collaborative agreement

■ **High Heel Project** [http://marikatayama.com/highheelproject\\_en/](http://marikatayama.com/highheelproject_en/)

In 2011, Mari Katayama, an artist with prosthetic legs, began to implement this project with a view toward creating prosthetic legs suitable for wearing high-heeled shoes and actually using them when performing on stage. Subsequently in 2022, 10 years after its launch, the second phase of the project commenced. The goal of the first phase was using components available in the market to remake ready-made high heels into shoes that Mari Katayama could actually wear when performing on stage. The second phase is ongoing in collaboration with Sergio Rossi, an Italian luxury shoe brand developing high-heeled shoes for Mari Katayama, and VOGUE JAPAN, serving as media collaborator for the project.

This project aims to provide people with an opportunity to think about welfare, the potential of the human body, and the freedom of choice that should be afforded to all people, by conducting researches in cooperation with experts participating in the project as well as with people with similar disabilities and associated specialized researchers. Based on Mari Katayama's idea that "I don't want high heels to be something special, but simply a choice, important only to you" the project is being implemented to provide all people with the freedom to embrace ideals, while connecting a range of diverse people working toward the same goal.

■ **Profile of Mari Katayama** <http://marikatayama.com/cv-2/>

Born in Saitama in 1987 and raised in Gunma Prefecture. Completed the intermedia art course at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts in 2012. Created a range of works, including hand-sewn objects, paintings and collage works made using her own body as the subject, as well as photographic self-portraits made in an elaborate manner using her own works for self-decoration. She conducts a variety of activities not only as an artist but also as a singer, a fashion model, a lecturer, and a writer. Her works have been displayed at exhibitions including: "MARI KATAYAMA AT KAUNAS PHOTOGRAPHY GALLERY" held in Kaunas, Lithuania in 2022; 58th Venice Biennale (Venice, Italy), "Broken Heart" (White Rainbow, London, U.K.), and "Mari Katayama" (University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, U.S.) held in 2019; "Photographs of Innocence and of Experience: Contemporary Japanese Photography vol. 14" (Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan) and "on the way home" (The Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Gunma, Japan) held in 2017; "Roppongi Crossing 2016: My Body, Your Voice" (Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan) held in 2016; and Aichi Triennale 2013 (Nayabashi, Aichi, Japan) held in 2013. Her major publications include "GIFT" (published by United Vagabonds in 2019).

She received the New Photographer Award at the 35th Higashikawa Awards in 2019 and won the 45th Kimura Ihei Award in 2020.

■ **About ALLUX™2** <https://welfare.nabtesco.com/prosthesis/>

Nabtesco developed ALLUX as the world's first electronically controlled prosthetic knee joint with 4-bar linkage design in 2015. As a result of the combination of the 4-bar linkage design that makes the prosthetic knee joint behave more like a human knee joint, with hydraulic and electronic control function for automatic adjustment of bending resistance, the product provides users with unprecedented stability and comfort. By using the sensor and microprocessor, the product detects changes in the user's walking status to adjust speed accordingly and allows the user to walk on slopes and go up and down stairs without the risk of sudden knee buckling. For the ALLUX2 latest model released in 2020, by using a special smartphone app developed for the product, users can change the operation mode according to the use environment and conditions. The product is thus equipped with additional functionality to provide users with even more latitude and peace of mind.



ALLUX2

■ **About Nabtesco** <https://www.nabtesco.com/>

Nabtesco Corporation was born through the integration of Teijin Seiki Co., Ltd. and NABCO Ltd. in 2003. Through its unique motion control technology, this machine component manufacturer supports the automation of manufacturing facilities and provides safety, comfort and a sense of security to transportation by land, sea and air. For precision reduction gears used in the joints of medium- to large-sized industrial robots, Nabtesco boasts a world market share of 60%, and for automatic doors for buildings, its domestic market share has reached about 55%. In the welfare equipment business, its main products are prosthetic equipment and holding brake systems.

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For more information on the "High Heels Project," please contact Mari Katayama's studio.

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