

### **【Echigo-Tsumari Art Field】**

The Echigo-Tsumari Art Field is an open-air art museum created around the idea that “humans exist within nature” (*ningen wa shizen ni naihō sareru*). It consists of artwork installations displayed in and around the villages of the six regions of Tōkamachi, Kawanishi, Matsudai, Matsunoyama, Tsunan, and Nakasato—an area totaling 760 square kilometers. The Art Field was started in 2000 with the first Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, which has been held every three years since. It is one of the world’s largest outdoor art festivals. As of 2019, it includes 200 permanent installments, and as many as 400 installments may be on display during the festival itself.

Perhaps even more than the artworks it contains, the Art Field is notable for the locations of its installations: in rice fields and alleyways, outside homes and vacant buildings, and in other locations where they might not be recognized as anything but objects from daily life. Some pieces, in the form of long benches, storage sheds, or scarecrows, were designed to be functional; other artworks highlight local nature and agriculture. This disparate placement is an intentional decision on the part of the Triennale planning committee and is intended to increase awareness of humanity’s place within the natural world.

The Art Field was started with the goal of revitalizing the region. Due in part to the difficulty of enduring the long winters, starting in the 1950s the local population began to decrease as more and more residents moved to the cities. To combat this, young artists were invited to create art that would reveal the area’s many assets to the world and stimulate local pride. In recent years, younger generations have begun coming to Tōkamachi, due in large part to the exposure the region has received from the Echigo-Tsumari Art Field.