PATINA
OSAKA

PATINA OSAKA PRESENTS "WALKING THROUGH SHIRAOI, AND DISCOVERING" AN EXHIBITION OF YOUTH STORYTELLING

In collaboration with National Geographic Photo Camp and Out of Eden Walk, the exhibition highlights photography and written words from Japan's emerging storytellers



Osaka, Japan, 14 May 2026 — Patina Osaka will present a new photography exhibition, ***"Walking Through Shiraoi, and Discovering,"*** from 12 to 31 May 2026. Open to the public in the hotel lobby, the exhibition features a powerful collection of photography and written narratives created by participants of the National Geographic Photo Camp—an immersive programme designed to empower the next generation of storytellers.

Rooted in the spirit of *Out of Eden Walk*—a long-term storytelling project by National Geographic Explorer Paul Salopek that retraces humanity's ancient migration routes on foot—the exhibition reflects a philosophy of slow journalism and deep, human connection. This perspective forms the foundation of the Photo Camp, where young participants are encouraged to observe, listen, and tell stories with intention and empathy.

The exhibition highlights images and written works created by youth from across Japan during the 2025 Photo Camp held in Shiraoi, Hokkaido—home to a rich Ainu cultural heritage. The Ainu are an Indigenous people of northern Japan, known for their deep spiritual connection to nature, distinctive traditions, and oral storytelling culture. Mentored by world-class storytellers—including National Geographic Explorers Matthieu Paley and Noriko Hayashi, *Out of Eden Walk* Founder Paul Salopek, and Photo Camp Founder Kirsten Elstner—students were guided to explore their surroundings and express their own perspectives through photography and writing. Hayashi, whose work has been featured in the 2022 Kyotographie International Photography Festival, will attend the opening alongside several of the students she mentored.

Hayashi will also lead a discussion on the transformative process of turning a single photograph into a shared experience, drawing on the making of this exhibition. The event coincides with Kyotographie, running until 17 May.



"Photography can often be a solitary experience but experiences like Kyotographie and Photo Camp prove it can foster deep human connection," says Hayashi. "For Photo Camp specifically, while we were in Hokkaido, we didn't just teach technical photography and writing skills, we built a community. I left the experience with a renewed sense of hope for the next generation of storytellers who will work together to tell the important stories of their community. I look forward to celebrating their photography and written reflections through this exhibition and beyond."

During the Photo Camp—supported by Patina Osaka and hosted in collaboration with *Out of Eden Walk*—ten student writers were paired with ten student photographers. Over five days, they documented the daily lives of residents in Shiraoi, engaging closely with the region's natural landscape and its deeply rooted Ainu culture. Through this process, they explored themes of cultural preservation and *osusowake*—the spirit of sharing that defines the community.





“At Patina Osaka, we believe in the power of transformative luxury—experiences that deepen our understanding of the world and each other,” says Ellen Franke, General Manager of Patina Osaka. “Supporting initiatives like Photo Camp reflects our commitment to nurturing emerging talent, celebrating local culture and community, and creating opportunities for meaningful connection. By hosting this exhibition, we hope to offer a platform for these young voices to be seen and heard.”

For many participants, this marked their first experience using a professional camera or conducting in-depth interviews. The exhibition presents a compelling collection of images and reflections, capturing both their creative journey and the essence of the community they encountered.

"*Walking Through Shiraoi, and Discovering*" will be on view at Patina Osaka from Tuesday, 12 May through 31 May. Located in the hotel lobby, the exhibition is open to the public and hotel guests daily, free of charge.

“Walking Through Shiraoi, and Discovering”
Exhibition period: 12 – 31 May 2026
Exhibition venue: Patina Osaka Gallery Space (Level 1)
Organised by: Patina Osaka x National Geographic Photo Camp

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ABOUT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO CAMP

National Geographic Photo Camp provides a meaningful introduction to photography for young people from around the world. The program includes an immersive week-long experience where students receive instruction and guidance from world-class National Geographic Explorers and photographers, to build their skills and confidence, explore the world around them, and develop deep connections with

each other. National Geographic Photo Camp aims to inspire the next generation of storytellers, and support them in sharing their experiences and perspectives.

ABOUT OUT OF EDEN WALK

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and National Geographic Explorer Paul Salopek is retracing our ancestors' ancient migration on foot out of Africa and across the globe. His 24,000-mile, multiyear odyssey began in Ethiopia — our evolutionary "Eden" — in January 2013 and will end at the tip of South America. Supported by the National Geographic Society, Salopek is engaging with the major stories of our time, from climate change and technological innovation to mass migration and cultural survival. As he traverses the globe at the measured pace of his footsteps, he reveals the texture of the lives of the people he encounters — nomads, villagers, traders, farmers and fishermen who seldom make the news. When this journey ends, this project will have pieced together a global mosaic of stories, faces, sounds and sights — an unparalleled archive of our shared humanity at the start of a new millennium.

ABOUT PATINA OSAKA

Between the sacred grounds of Naniwanomiya-Ato and the storied Osaka Castle, Patina Osaka invites mindful explorers to experience transformative luxury reimagined through the lens of conscious living and creative expression. Our 20-storey sanctuary rises from Osaka's "City of Water" like a living testament to sustainable beauty. Here, naturally aged copper, thoughtfully sourced woods, and flowing water tell tales of time, honouring both Earth and artistry.

221 mindfully crafted rooms reflect *kisetsukan* – the Japanese art of seasonal awareness – with spaces that flow in harmony with nature's rhythm. Discover P72, which micro-seasonal cuisine tells stories of local artisans and the land's bounty, and The Listening Room, where sound pioneer Devon Turnbull (OJAS) transforms music into meditation through meticulously crafted equipment. Patina Osaka – a confluence of mindful luxury, artistic expression, and sustainable sophistication – designed for those who seek not just to stay, but to grow.

ABOUT PATINA HOTELS & RESORTS

Patina Hotels & Resorts pioneers a fresh perspective in luxury lifestyle. From Patina Maldives, Fari Islands, to Patina Osaka and upcoming openings in Tianjin and Sanya, Patina invites conscious travellers on the Perpetual Journey—guiding guests toward connection, wellbeing, growth, and nourishment through transformative experiences. As destinations within destinations, makers and guests co-create culture through art, music, and design. Collective expression becomes Infinite Imprints—enduring memories of shared creativity. www.patinahotels.com