

PRESS RELEASE



June 2025

JP Tower Museum INTERMEDIATHEQUE

Special Exhibition

“Faces and Flora – Philippines and Japan Native Plant Photography”

The JP Tower Museum INTERMEDIATHEQUE (IMT) will be holding a special exhibition, entitled “Faces and Flora – Philippines and Japan Native Plant Photography.” This exhibition is the result of the Memorandum of Understanding on Academic Research renewed in 2023 between The University Museum, The University of Tokyo (UMUT), and the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP). It is also presented in celebration of Philippines-Japan Friendship Month 2025 with the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Japan as a major partner.

The exhibition features portraits by special partner photographer Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo, based in Manila. It consists of botanical still-life photographs and portraits of models adorned with native plants from the Philippines and Japan. A recipient of the Fujifilm GFX Challenge Grant Program 2022, Mayo created this series by merging his deep interest in native flora with his distinctive vision as a portrait photographer. Developed in collaboration with botanists and museum curators from both countries, the series presents “Faces and Flora” through a unique beauty editorial lens. Inspired by the Faces in Flora Exhibition 2024 at the National Museum of Natural History in Manila, the photographs of Japanese plants on display are newly produced works, taken specifically for this exhibition in April 2025 at the Botanical Gardens, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo (Koishikawa Botanical Garden).

The photographs are exhibited alongside herbarium specimens—fundamental materials for botanical research, including classification, identification, and documentation of natural environments. The Herbarium of the University of Tokyo (TI) and the Philippine National Herbarium (PNH), are internationally recognized research centers for the flora of East and Southeast Asia. For this exhibition, specimens of the same species photographed by Mayo were specially selected from these collections for public display.

The Intermediatheque has curated numerous original exhibitions under the theme of “Art and Science,” guided by its unique design philosophy. In this context, viewing Mayo’s photographic portraits together with scientifically significant plant specimens invites audiences to explore new connections between art and science. The exhibition offers fresh insights into the flora of the Philippines and Japan, while deepening appreciation for the natural environments and cultural narratives in which these plants exist.

In addition, the exhibition highlights two bird specimens collected by the naturalist Yaeko Yamamura (1899–1996) on Basilan Island in the Philippines. Now part of the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology collection and entrusted to UMUT, these specimens provide insight into the enduring history of exchange between Japan and the Philippines.



● Key Information

Title: Special Exhibition

“Faces and Flora – Philippines and Japan Native Plant Photography”

Dates: July 12 – November 9, 2025

Opening Hours: 11:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays)

*Opening hours may change.

Closed: Mondays (or the following Tuesday if Monday is a national holiday; however, the museum is open on August 11 and 18) and September 1–8. May close irregularly.

Venue: Intermediatheque 2F [GREY CUBE]

Admission: Free of charge

Organizers: The University Museum, The University of Tokyo (UMUT) + National Museum of the Philippines (NMP)

Special Partner Photographer: Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo

Major Partner: Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines

Cooperation: University of the Philippines – Institute of Biology (UPIB) | Philippine Taxonomic Initiative, Inc. (PTI) | Botanical Gardens, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo | Yamashina Institute of Ornithology

Support: FUJIFILM Corporation | The Japan Foundation, Manila | Museum Foundation of the Philippines

Address: KITTE 2-3F, 2-7-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

Access: JR lines and Tokyo Metro Marunouchi line Tokyo Station (Marunouchi South Exit). Nijubashimae Station (Exit 4) on the Chiyoda Line (about 2 minutes on foot).

● Exhibition Page

<https://www.intermediatheque.jp/en/schedule/view/id/IMT0288>

● Contact

+81-47-316-2772

From Japan: 050-5541-8600 (NTT Hello Dial Service)

● Interview Application

press@intermediatheque.jp

● Related Event

Lectures and Talk Session

“Interpreting the Concept of *Faces and Flora*”

Lecturers: Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo (Portrait Photographer), Jhaydee Ann Pascual (Museum Curator I, Officer-in-Charge Botany and National Herbarium Division, National Museum of Natural History), and Ayumi Terada (Project Associate Professor, The University Museum, The University of Tokyo)

Date and Time: Saturday, July 12 2025, 15:00–17:00
(Doors open at 14:50)

Venue: Intermediatheque 2F, Lecture Theatre ACADEMIA

Admission: Free (no reservation required)

The number of seats is limited to 48. Your understanding is appreciated.

Languages: English and Japanese with interpretation

Organizer: The University Museum, The University of Tokyo (UMUT)

Research Grant: JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP23K00232
(Principal Investigator: Ayumi Terada)

Major Partner: Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines

● Publications

Exhibition catalog (Japanese and English, 168 pages in total)

Postcards (6 types)

Exhibition introduction card (custom A4 variant)

Poster (B2 size)

Flyer (postcard size)

● Exhibition Structure

Part 1: Native Flora of the Philippines – 14 sets

Part 2: Native Flora of Japan – 8 sets

Part 3: Bird Specimens Collected by Yaeko Yamamura – 2 specimens

*Each set in Parts 1 and 2 consists of two photographs—one portrait and one still-life—by Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo and one plant specimen.

*All eight sets of Native Flora of Japan in Part 2 will be entirely updated between the first and second halves of the exhibition period.

● Main Exhibits



Adonia merrillii (Becc.) Becc. Photographed by Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo (2023–2024)



Collected by D.A. Madulid et al. | April 15–30, 1982 | Mt. Bulusan, Sorsogon, Luzon Island, Philippines | Philippine National Herbarium (PNH 150446)



Dillenia philippinensis Rolfe Photographed by Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo (2023–2024)



Collected by M.D. Sulit | April 22, 1947 | Mt. Makiling, Laguna, Luzon Island, Philippines | Philippine National Herbarium (PNH 6978)

● Main Exhibits



Camellia japonica L. Photographed by Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo (2025)



Collected by Philipp Franz von Siebold |
1823–1828 or 1859–1862 | Japan |
UMUT (TI00397158)



Spiraea thunbergii Siebold ex Blume Photographed by Jan Zoilo Rafael Mayo (2025)



Collector unknown | March 1878 |
Koishikawa Botanical Garden |
UMUT (TI00397153)
