

## CONTENTS



Regional Fellow Meeting Ghent 2025

The Trees that Survived Hiroshima  
Andrea Palasti

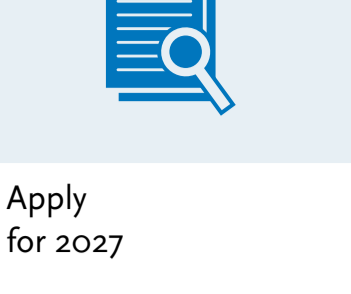
Meet this Year's Fellows



Edinburgh 2026 – UK and Ireland Fellow Meeting



Special 40th Anniversary Publication



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## REGIONAL FELLOW MEETING GHENT 2025



Last November, the **Regional Fellow Meeting** was held at the University of Ghent. It brought together Benelux alumni Fellows and researchers who had recently completed their Fellowships.

The meeting was hosted by Prof. Dr. Andreas Niehaus, Professor of Japanology at Ghent University and President of the European Association for Japanese Studies. In addition to his presentation, attendees also enjoyed Prof. Dr. Julia Jansen's talk (Vice Dean for Research and Director of the Husserl Archives, Higher Institute of Philosophy at KU Leuven) whose insights sparked engaging discussions among participants.

Special guest, Mr. Shuichi Nishino, Minister and Deputy Head of the Embassy of Japan, attended the meeting. His attendance highlighted the importance of academic and cultural exchange between Europe and Japan.

Because many Fellows began their programmes later in 2025, only a limited number had completed their Fellowship in time to receive their certificate of completion. Here they are pictured below.

Names of the Fellows from left to right: Sebastian Samberger, Taro Tokutake, Andrea M. Pérez González, Kensuke Nishimiya

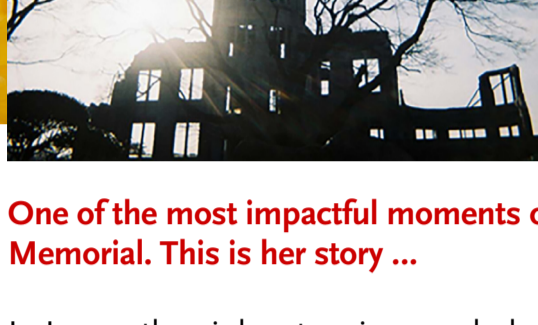


## THE TREES THAT SURVIVED HIROSHIMA

Andrea Palasti, Canon Foundation Fellow

*"The survivor trees stand as living witnesses to destruction and resilience."*

Andrea Palasti



One of the most impactful moments of Andrea's time in Japan was her visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. This is her story ...

In Japan, the ginkgo tree is a symbol of resilience and hope. Each autumn, its leaves turn bright gold and fall almost all at once - a quiet reminder of life's cycles.

Some of these trees carry an extraordinary history. In Hiroshima, several ginkgoes survived the atomic bomb of August 6, 1945. At the time, experts predicted that nothing would grow there for decades. Yet within months, charred trunks began to bud again. These ginkgoes are among the many *hibakujumoku* (被爆樹木) - "atomic bombed trees" - that endured the blast. Their seeds and saplings are shared around the world as living symbols of resilience, peace, and renewal.

Standing at the site of the first atomic bombing in history and walking through the Peace Memorial Museum was deeply moving. The experience was not only historical but profoundly human. Seeing the *survivor trees*, which endured the blast and continue to grow today, was especially powerful. They stand as living witnesses to destruction and resilience, embodying both memory and hope. The visit served as a quiet but lasting reminder of the responsibility we carry (as educators, researchers, and artists!) to contribute to a more thoughtful and humane world.

It was one of the most profound experiences of my time in Japan. During my visit, I sat beside a few of these trees in the calm of the city. Although I had photographed the leaves, I wanted to carry more than an image so I gathered their fallen leaves. It was one of the most profound experiences of my time in Japan. During my visit, I sat beside a few of these trees in the calm of the city. Although I had photographed the leaves, I wanted to carry more than an image, so I gathered their fallen leaves and made simple drawings by tracing their outlines, which I later sent to my friends and colleagues - small golden reminders that life can return, even after devastation.

Andrea was granted a 6 months' Fellowship. Her research period was split between the Tokyo University of the Arts and the Vascular Plant Herbarium, National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo. Her research subject: The Killer Chrysanthemum: history, science and poetics of the Dalmatian pyrethrum.

## MEET THIS YEAR'S FELLOWS

 <b>DR. YUTO ARAI</b> FROM Tottori University, Japan TO Bielefeld University, Germany HOST Host Doctor Tilman Polster <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Social Sciences: Developing a Bowen Theory-Based Family-Centered Care Model for Children with Epilepsy: Continuous Support from Diagnosis to Employment	 <b>MR. ANDREA BIANCO</b> FROM University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy TO Keio University, Japan HOST Professor Maiko Odaira <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Literature: The Cultural Imagination of Public Bathhouses in Contemporary Japan	 <b>DR. SAMUEL BLAZQUEZ FERNANDEZ</b> FROM Complutense University of Madrid, Spain TO Kyoto University, Japan HOST Professor Tsuyoshi Terakawa <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Chemistry & Pharmacy: Decoding Phase-Separated Transcription Factors by Integrating Simulations & DNA Curtain Imaging
 <b>MS. BENEDETTA CASAVECCHIA</b> FROM Max-Planck-Institut für Astrophysik, Germany TO Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe, Japan HOST Professor Enrico Garaldi <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Astronomy: The First Galaxies: A Unique Era for Connecting Theoretical Models & Observations	 <b>DR. FRANCESCO ELLIA</b> FROM Advanced Telecommunication Research International Institute, Japan TO Ritsumeikan University, Japan HOST Professor Yuko Ishihara <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Philosophy and Religion: From Neuroscience to Nishida: A cross-cultural approach to consciousness in the age of AI	 <b>MR. OMER CAN ERGUL</b> FROM Koç University, Turkey TO Tokyo University of Science, Japan HOST Professor Dr. Motoshi Hayano <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Medicine: A CRISPR-Based Programmable DNA Damage Signaling Platform to Model Epigenetic Information Loss in Aging
 <b>DR. TESFAYE HABTEMARIAM GEZAHEGN</b> FROM Arba Minch University, Ethiopia TO Kyoto University, Japan HOST Professor Akira Tanaka <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Social Sciences: Preserving Oral Traditions of a Hunter-gatherer Community in South Ethiopia: a research on using the Koegu oral narratives for teaching English	 <b>MR. MARC GUTIERREZ</b> FROM Institut de Robòtica i Informàtica Industrial (CSIC-UPC), Spain TO Nagoya University, Japan HOST Professor Keisuke Fujii <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Computer Sciences: Towards sports video understanding: from perception to 3D based advanced metrics	 <b>DR. VASILIKI LIAKI</b> FROM Spanish National Cancer Research Center (CNIO), Spain TO University of Tokyo, Japan HOST Professor Atsushi Niida <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Medicine: Genomic characterization and study of tumor evolution in recurrent pancreatic cancer
 <b>DR. RAHUL SINGH MAHARJAN</b> FROM University of Manchester, UK TO Kyoto University, Japan HOST Professor Takayuki Kanda <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Computer Sciences: Multimodal Foundational Model for Human-Agent Interaction	 <b>DR. KOSUKE MATSUZONO</b> FROM Ichi Medical University, Japan TO University College London, UK HOST Professor Simon Mead <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Medicine: Deciphering the Pathogenesis of Sporadic Prion Disease: A Japan-UK Collaborative Study	 <b>DR. TOMÁS MCINERNEY</b> FROM Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland TO Kyoto University, Japan HOST Professor Tatsuhiko Inatani <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Law: When Should an Algorithm Decide? A socio-legal account of the potential and limitations of AI in the judicial role
 <b>MR. PANAGIOTIS MOUMTSAKIS</b> FROM University of Oxford, UK TO University of Tokyo, Japan HOST Professor Kentaro Fukumoto <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Politics & International Relations: The Politics of Generative AI Exposure: Occupational Risk and Policy Responses in Japan	 <b>MR. ENRIQUE MORA ROAS</b> FROM Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain TO Waseda University, Japan HOST Professor Pau Pitarch <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Literature: Disability in women's writing: Gender representation in Japanese Contemporary Literature [女性文学における障害: 日本現代文学のジェンダー表象]	 <b>DR. LETICIA DOS MUCHANGOS</b> FROM Hiroshima University, Japan TO University of Cape Town, South Africa HOST Professor Dr.-Ing. Harro von Blottnitz <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Environmental Studies: Around the Way Circular: Lessons for a Sustainable University Campus
 <b>DR. MIREIA NIEVES ROSILLA</b> FROM Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, Spain TO Institute for Cosmic Ray Research, University of Tokyo, Japan HOST Professor Hidetoshi Kubo <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Astronomy: Unveiling Cosmic Accelerators: Probing the Most Luminous Quasar Jets with CTAO	 <b>MR. KOTA NISHI</b> FROM Kyushu University, Japan TO Université Toulouse III – Paul Sabatier, France HOST Dr. Audrey Dussutour <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Mathematical Biology: Uncovering the Principles of Learning Transfer in Slime Molds	 <b>MR. ANDREA PASIN</b> FROM University of Padua, Italy TO Waseda University, Japan HOST Professor Tetsuya Sakai <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Computer Sciences: Designing and Implementing a Protocol for Automatic RAG Evaluation
 <b>MR. DANIEL R. TORRES RUIZ</b> FROM University of Nottingham, UK TO Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST), Japan HOST Professor Kenji Doya <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Computer Sciences: Neuroscience-Inspired Approaches to Reinforcement Learning for Enhancing the Efficiency and Scalability of Hyper-Heuristics	 <b>DR. KEIKEN RI</b> FROM Juntendo University, Japan TO IRCAN: Institute for Research on Cancer and Aging, France HOST Professor Patrick Brest <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Biosciences: Role of Lipid metabolic control of post-transcriptional plasticity in lung cancer	 <b>MS. ANNA WOLSZCZAK</b> DIRECTOR, LITERARY SPECIALIST <a href="http://annawolszczak.com.pl">http://annawolszczak.com.pl</a> FROM Warsaw Chamber Opera, Poland TO BEBERICA Theatre Company, Japan HOST Mana Yumii <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Art and Musicology: Living Paper/ Papier ożywy: participatory theater for children supporting intercultural understanding
 <b>DR. CHINATSU YASUDA</b> FROM University of Tokyo, Japan TO European University Institute, Italy <b>FEUI</b> <b>RESEARCH PROJECT</b> Politics & International Relations: The Significance of the EU's External Cultural Policy after the War in Ukraine		

## EDINBURGH 2026 – UK AND IRELAND FELLOW MEETING



The next **Regional Fellow Meeting** will take place at the University of Edinburgh on Friday 13 November 2026 for alumni from the UK, Ireland and recently returned Fellows. More information will be sent out in August/September.

## SPECIAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Fellowship Programme in 2027, a special commemorative publication will be released later this year.

Featuring essays by current and alumni Fellows, the book explores the role of visibility in scientific research and reflects the impact of a global network of 500+ Fellows across 40 countries.

Interested in receiving a copy? Please email the Secretariat to reserve yours.

## APPLY FOR 2027

International research opportunities connecting Europe, Japan and Africa

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

For: Europeans and Japanese nationals conducting research in Japan and Europe respectively.  
 Stipend: Up to €30,000 per year  
 Duration: 3 months – 1 year (starting from 2027)

## JAPAN–AFRICA PROGRAMME

For: Postgraduate scholars from Japan and Africa conducting research in African Studies.  
 Stipend: Up to €27,500 per year  
 Duration: 6 weeks – 1 year (split stays possible)

## DEADLINE FOR BOTH PROGRAMMES 15 SEPTEMBER 2026

[General information](#) / [Apply online for both programmes via our website](#)

## CO-SPONSORED RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

For: Japanese nationals who obtained their PhD within the past five years or have official approval to defend their thesis before the programme start date.  
 Duration: September 2027 – August 2028

## DEADLINE 18 OCTOBER 2026

[General information](#) / [Apply via the European University Institute](#)

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