

# Work description: about the Muttoni Collection in Setagaya Literary Museum

Automatic mechanical doll maker, Masahiko Muto, aka Muttoni.

The combination of various movements of doll and machine, music, light and the artist's narration unfold stories and worlds in Muttoni's work, a unique form of art that entrances many.

Since the opening of this museum, seven Muttoni pieces have been assembled as one of its outstanding collections. In the spring of 2018, three new pieces were added, and we would like to take this opportunity to show off their charm one by one, in a rotating exhibit.

In the work of Muttoni, within a few minutes the dolls' circular movements in their small boxes capture the characters' tales of entrances and exits.

Experience a new encounter with storytelling.

Setagaya Literary Museum

Stories are scattered here.  
They, one after another, throw on lights,  
Folding away many moments.  
They illuminate the world for but an instant,  
And soon  
Return a still darkness.  
But the ephemeral shimmers  
Are perhaps dreaming of eternity.  
This is where pleasure and stillness combine:  
Welcome to MUTTONI PARADISE.

Muttoni

## Artist profile

Born Masahiko Muto in 1956 in Yokohama.

A story-telling and clay-making boy, he loved telling people his stories and making dioramas with oil-based clay.

While he played trumpet in a brass band through junior high and high school, he also began oil painting.

In 1979 he graduated from the Sokei Academy of Fine Art and Design Research Program. In the mid-1980s, in Europe, he gradually shifted from oil painting to three-dimensional work.

In 1987, he produced his first mechanical doll work, Heaven and Hell. From around 1990, he began to add more complex dolls, movements and narratives, establishing his current 'box theater' style with its combinations of lights, music, scene shifts and his own narration. He continues to exhibit all over Japan, while widening the frontier of the unseen world of mechanical dolls.



## Works

### 猫町 Cat Town

Year of production: 1994

Original novel: Nekomachi (Cat Town) by Sakutarō Hagiwara

H720×W600×D600mm

Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum

A walking path along which a man who entered a parallel world wandered. It was a hilly area near Shimokitazawa, with iron towers lined up in geometric positions. The border between the real world and the parallel world lit like a magic lantern may actually have been the high voltage power lines between these iron towers. However, there are no longer many such towers remaining.



## 山月記 The Moon over the Mountain

Year of production: 1995

Original novel: Sangetsuki (The Moon over the Mountain) by Atsushi Nakajima

Reading (audio): Takuo Kasahara

H800×W600×D600mm

Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum



In the deep woods you entered in your journey,  
a strangely shaped thing was reflecting the moonlight.  
If it was your old friend...



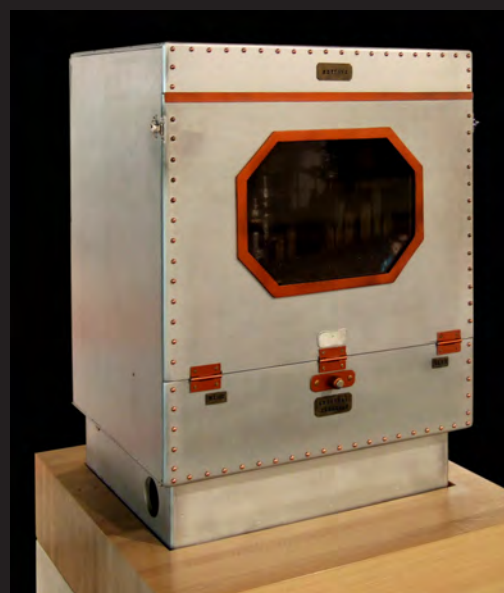
## 月世界探検記 A Trip to the Moon

Year of production: 1995

Original novel: Getsu-sekai Tanken-ki (A Trip to the Moon) by Juza Unno

H800×W600×D600mm

Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum



What was the world of the Moon that people imagined a century ago?

It was, probably, just as the future described at the time: filled with bright sparks of what is to come.



## 漂流者 Drifter

Year of production: 2006

Original novel: Yume Ju-ya (Ten Dreaming Nights) by Soseki Natsume

H1200×W400×D400mm

Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum

In A man who happened to be on a big ship. A drifting sun. And the people on the ship. The man who jumped off the deck suffers in regret in front of the black waves of the ocean.

But it is just a dream.

Here, a regret and a life itself is just a dream...



## スピリット・オブ・ソング The Spirit of Song

Year of production: 2006

Music: Kakikake no Uta (Unfinished Song) by Kazufumi Miyazawa

H1600×W350×D380mm

Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum

What is a song for a poet?

He might be a captive of his own poem.

In that case, who is the “she” in the song?

She was produced by the poet.

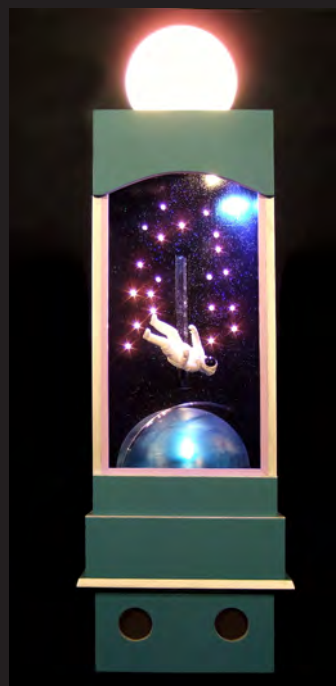
It might be her: the spirit of song.



## アローン・ランデブー Alone Rendezvous

Year of production: 2007  
Inspiration: Kaleidoscope by Ray Bradbury  
Music: Intermezzo from Cavalleria  
Rusticana by Pietro Mascagni  
H1200×W300×D320mm  
Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum

Will dawn appear in this universe, and  
what is this splendid night...?  
The majestic night of space where stars  
in the galaxy brighten  
A man's journey begins now.



## 眠り Sleep

Year of production: 2007  
Original novel: Nemuri (Sleep) by Haruki  
Murakami  
H1200×W400×D400mm  
Collection of Setagaya Literary Museum

Days, consumption, deviation, tendencies -  
repeated meaninglessly.  
“Sleep” is to adjust these things.  
“If sleep is nothing more than a periodic  
repairing of the parts of me that are being  
worn away, I don't need it any more.”  
And the woman lost her fear of not being  
able to sleep.



## アトラスの回想 Atlas' s Recollection

Year of production: 2015  
Original poem: Jigoku no Tenshi  
(The Angel of Hell) by Chuya  
Nakahara  
H1420×W400×D400mm

Atlas recollects his sins.  
And he dreams.  
About the angels who spread  
their wings and dance.  
“When I am spoilt by the stars  
and arrogant towards the sun,  
you are my servant who  
deserves praise.”



## 題のない歌 A Song without Title

Year of production: 2016  
Original poem: Daimei no Nai Uta (A  
Song without Title) by Sakutarō  
Hagiwara  
H820×W550×D680mm

Many different visions were  
brought back through a glass of  
whiskey at a dingy bar.  
“A wharf that is covered with  
summer grasses” , “a strange  
boat rusted brick-red” , and “the  
graveyard of silence.”  
In order to weave a forgotten  
story, the man brings the whiskey  
to his lips.  
A steam whistle is heard far  
away.



## 蜘蛛の糸 The Spider's Thread

Year of production: 2016  
Original novel: Kumo no Ito  
(The Spider's Thread) by  
Ryunosuke Akutagawa  
H1900×W500×D500mm  
Collection of Setagaya  
Literary Museum

If the sinner Kandata  
climbed the spider's thread  
to the top, would he be  
able to reach heaven?  
In the work, Kandata  
repeatedly climbs and falls  
until the mechanism stops.

