

Nan Goldin

Reframing the opioid crisis
BY PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE

In 2017, one of the great American photographers, Nan Goldin, was recovering from an addiction to the painkiller OxyContin when she learned that the maker of the drug, Purdue Pharma, was owned by the billionaire Sackler family. The Sacklers were famous for their philanthropy, their name engraved on the walls of the most illustrious art museums in the world: the Met, the British Museum, the Louvre. Goldin was indignant. Given the family's connection to the opioid crisis, how could the art world have allowed them to launder their reputation?

She launched an audacious campaign to shame museums into cutting ties with the Sacklers,



designing a series of elaborately choreographed protests. With her impeccable eye and the zeal of a survivor, Goldin framed each protest like a photograph. It worked: she placed a burning spotlight on the family, who recently

reached settlements requiring them to pay \$6 billion to help remediate the crisis. She pioneered a powerful new form of activism and started an urgent conversation about tainted money in the arts. And sure enough, one by one,

museums began removing the Sackler name—because, through Goldin's work, it had become a byword for infamy.

Keefe is a journalist and author, most recently of Empire of Pain



Cristina Villarreal Velásquez & Ana Cristina González Vélez

Movement builders
BY AILBHE SMYTH

I know what it takes to move a country. It's hard, and you have to have infinite stamina and belief and passionate commitment. And these two women have it in spades.

To finally make abortion legal in Colombia despite the influence of the country's religious right, Ana Cristina González Vélez and Cristina Villarreal Velásquez had to think strategically from the get-go. They went straight to the place that was the obstacle, the Constitutional Court. They also knew the importance of having

a broad-based social movement—galvanizing women across the country to wear green handkerchiefs (which have become symbolic across the region of support for abortion access) and energetically claim their rights.

It is remarkable what Ana Cristina and Cristina did. It gives us hope for the future of access in the U.S., despite what is happening with *Roe v. Wade*. It empowers women in Poland—where abortion laws are among the strictest in Europe—to say, “OK, our countries are different, but if they can do it, we

can pick ourselves up and have another try.” That sense of international solidarity is crucial because there are so many countries where it is difficult for women to even stand up and fight.

I would very much like to meet these women, to shake their hands and give them a hug. They are brilliant.

Smyth is an Irish activist and convener of Together for Yes, a coalition of civil-society groups that successfully campaigned to repeal Ireland's strict ban on abortion

Invisible innovations, tangible transformations: Japan's humble dominance of niche fields



“We do our best to attract the best and brightest to build up our research and development teams to stimulate the creation of new ideas.”

Hiroshi Ogasawara, Chairman and President, Yaskawa Electric Corporation



“As a general trading company, we can provide the same ideals of improvement in our services. We call Japanese hospitality *omotenashi*, and we can supply high-quality services to our clients.”

Masayoshi Fujimoto, Representative Director, President and CEO, Sojitz Corporation



“The ‘Japanese mindset’ philosophy is the idea of perpetual innovation and improvement as well as a level of effort in manufacturing not seen in many other places.”

Kyoichiro Oki, Chairman and President, SPK Corporation

The business world is about to change beyond all recognition. And it's being powered by some of the most exciting companies you have likely not heard of yet.

A bright future featuring artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics and high-speed connectivity is set to turn work and home lives upside down and is being pioneered by a hidden army of Japanese B2B firms excelling in fields as diverse as health, electronics, chemicals, construction and textiles.

Often arising from humble roots, this wave of hard-working, client-focused and socially responsible, Sustainable Development Goals-driven, companies are leading the way towards the tech-integrated ‘Society 5.0’, exporting traditional Japanese standards of efficiency and quality around the world. **佐藤社長インタビュー** Masayoshi Fujimoto, president of Japanese general trading firm Sojitz Corporation, who are focusing on recycling and circular economy businesses, said: “Japanese manufacturing still has a competitive advantage when it comes to the technology to produce high quality products with standardized consistency.”

The tenets of industrial philosophy are *monozukuri* and *kaizen*, all built around aiming for efficiency, value, and a constant strive for improvement and change. As Susumu Sato, president of pharmaceuticals firm Sato Yakuin Kogyo, said: “The Japanese concept of *monozukuri* is connected to high-quality manufacturing and attention to detail. We are constantly

improving and working on quality management to refine and improve our products.” Nobushige Teramoto, president of cleaning products firm Teramoto agreed: “Quality is the strength of Japan. We are both careful and detail-oriented in our work, never hesitating to take the time that is required for a high-quality product. We are diligent and hardworking people, which is shown through the quality of our work.”

That sense of national pride in a job well done and a customer well taken care of, is at the heart of this Japanese industrial regeneration. Unlike previous economic upturns, this B2B and SME-led movement is not about household name brands, but a vast number of smaller businesses which work to make the bigger manufacturers and developers tick.

Supporting businesses with robotics and automation systems is central to electronics firm Yaskawa Electric Corporation, as president Hiroshi Ogasawara confirmed: “We believe that innovation is the foundation of our corporation.” He added: “We are always looking for partners in

different industries to better understand how our technology could be applied.” And while Asia-Pacific neighbors like China and Taiwan may have become manufacturing hubs due to scale and lower costs, firms in Japan are reporting a comeback thanks to a focus on quality, leading to better value. Kyoichiro Oki, president of vehicle parts manufacturers SPK, confirmed: “It's true that we suffer from higher costs compared to countries such as India or China that benefit from economies of scale, but the quality cannot be compared. That's just a part of the Japanese culture.” With next-gen tech a key part of the success story, sustainable development goals and green thinking have also been built into the foundations.

Electric vehicle development, and other rechargeable devices, from phones and screens to IoT-connected equipment, play their part in the revolution. The success stories bursting out of Japan are growing every day in terms of the innovation taking place, the standards set and the benefits felt.

In a post-COVID world, where supply chains and lockdowns have threatened business, these firms are showing ambition by aiming for growth amid new challenges. The biggest tech advances might not be seen until tomorrow. But they are being born today, in Japan, thanks to these hidden heroes.

GOLDIN: YANA PASKOVA; EYEVINE/REXUS; GONZÁLEZ VÉLEZ SOURCE PHOTO: ALEXANDRA QUINTERO FOR FINNCO COMUNICACIONES; VILLARREAL VELÁSQUEZ SOURCE PHOTO: JAVIER JIMÉNEZ