

May 2014

JAPAN
CREATIVE
CENTRE

EMBASSY OF JAPAN

CULTURAL E-MAGAZINE



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS IN JCC

(TBD) 03.06.2014 - 21.06.2014 Exhibition: Beauty of KŌGEI: Art Crafts in Japan

RELATED EVENTS

25.04.2014 - 25.05.2014	Liang Court- Celebrates Kodomo no Hi
01.04.2014 - 30.06.2014	Fables, Folktales and Fantastic Future - Stories We Share
25.05.2014	Four Seasons Tea Gathering - Summer @ Liang Court
30.05.2014- 27.07.2014	CERTAINTY / ENTROPY Exhibition By Aiko Tezuka
07.06.2014	Esplanade Presents Flipside - Voice Mechanics by Maywa Denki
20.06.2014-23.06.2014	Shamisen Workshop 三味線 by Mr. Baisho Matsumoto
26.06.2014-11.07.2014	Japanese Film Festival 2014 @Gallery Theatre, National Museum of Singapore
28.06.2014	Japanese Band Alice Nine 1st Asia Tour to Singapore
20.07.2014	Concert HIBIKIV
06.09.2014	Enra Japanese Contemporary at Samarpana Festival
19.09.2014-21.09.2014	Miyake Daiko Workshop 三宅太鼓 by Miyakejima Geino Doshikai

Further information and updates about JCC events can be found on the JCC Website and Facebook

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF JCC'S PAST EVNTS IN ARPIL 2014

- 1.1 "10 Nights of Dream" EXHIBITION & OPENING CEREMONY /P3
- 1.2 "10 Nights of Dream" Engraving DEMONSTRATION /P4
- 1.3 "Understanding 10 Nights of Dream" Asst Prof Deborah Shamon *Talk* | P5
- 1.4 Singapore Discovery Centre *EXHIBITION* /P6

JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

- 2.1 Hachiju-Hachiya | P7



Engraved Glass Art Piece by Dominique Fonde

1 OVERVIEW

The month of April welcomed ‘International Friendship Day 2014’, an ongoing special exhibition held at Singapore Discovery Centre, as well as, ‘10 Nights of Dream’, a glass art exhibition by glass artist Mr Dominic Fondé. An engraving demonstration by Mr Fondé was also put together to give guests an idea of how the exhibition items were made. Also held as part of ‘10 Nights of Dream’, was a talk by Assistant Professor Deborah Shamoon to provide guests with an insight into the deeper literary meanings behind Mr Fondé’s works.

1.1 “10 Nights of Dream” EXHIBITION

“10 Nights of Dream” was a unique exhibition by glass artist Mr Dominic Fondé, held at the JCC from the 5th to the 16th of April. For this exhibition Mr Fondé combined glass art with literary themes and ideas discussed in a collection of short stories of the same name, by renowned Japanese author Natsume Sōseki. For the first section of this exhibition, Mr Fondé collaborated with 3 artists from Japan; Mr Masao Takaoka, Mr Ryuichi Tateno and Ms Ikumi Honda. Mr Takaoka served as the art director for the Shadow Calligraphy series while Mr Tateno and Ms Honda lent their expertise as the Latin alphabet and Japanese (Kana) type designers respectively.

Selected quotes from both the Japanese and the English translated version of Natsume Sōseki’s short stories were sand blasted onto glass panels. These glass panels were then mounted on the wall, using overhead spotlights to cast shadows on the wall, rendering the text readable.



‘Dream Landscape’ series by Dominic Fondé



Dominic Fondé during the Opening

For the second part of the exhibition, known as the dream landscape series; Mr Fondé invited glass artists Ms Yuko Watanabe and Ms Yukako Kojima to collaborate with him. Both Ms Watanabe and Ms Kojima made special glass fragments, which were affixed onto the top of the glass panels from dream landscape series.

In total, the series comprised of 10 hand engraved glass panels, portraying the surreal imagery and various atmospheres that were presented in Sōseki short stories. Displayed in an area with low light and a black backdrop, the glass panels were placed in custom made wooden stands with inbuilt LED lights. The dim atmosphere, contrasted with the blue glow of the lights illuminated the engraved panels, thus enhancing the mystical feel of the dream landscape series.

“10 Nights of Dream” Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of ‘10 Nights of Dream’ was held on the 4th of April to officially open the exhibition. Director of JCC, Mr Toshihide Ando gave the opening remarks for the ceremony, commending this exhibition for creatively combining the use of glass art with literature. Following Mr Ando’s remarks, Mr Dominic Fondé thanked the artists that he’d collaborated with and briefly spoke about his inspiration and fascination with Sōseki which led to the creation of this exhibition. Guests were also given a tour of the exhibits by Mr Fondé himself. Mr Fondé also treated those in attendance to personal explanations of his works and many were in awe at the amount of preparation involved behind the creation of each of the engraved pieces.

1.2 “10 Nights of Dream” Engraving Demonstration

As part of “10 Nights of Dream” exhibition, Mr Dominic Fondé demonstrated his artistic skills during an engraving demonstration session that was held on the 5th of April. During the demonstration, Mr Fondé spoke about his transition into the world of glass art and his various inspirations that have been derived from his daily life.

Citing birds, feathers and literature as one of his muses, he mentioned that some of the earliest work of his glass engraving career involved the engraving of short stories onto glass plates and wine glasses.



Audience member engraving his name on a sheet of glass



Dominic Fondé giving a demo on Glass Engraving

All eyes were immediately focused on Mr Fondé from the moment he produced a sheet of panel glass and various sized drills used in engraving his works. Donning a face mask to avoid inhaling minuscule glass particles, he then effortlessly etched a feather onto the

sheet of glass step-by-step. From watching Mr Fondé, audience members were given a clear idea on the processes involved in his works.

To their pleasant surprise, Mr Fondé gave audience members a chance to engrave their names on the same glass panel that he'd engraved the feather on. One by one, those present were given a turn at using the drill under Mr Fondé's watchful eye. Some even went a step further by engraving smiley faces and various pictures onto the glass. At the end of the session, one lucky winner went back home with the engraved piece done at the demonstration.

1.3 "Understanding '10 Nights of Dream',

Talk by Asst Prof Deborah Shamoan

Understanding '10 Nights of Dream', Talk by Assistant Professor Deborah Shamoan, was an event held in conjunction with Mr Dominic Fondé's exhibition. Assistant Professor Deborah Shamoan who teaches Japanese literature at the National University of Singapore, Department of Japanese Studies, gave a talk about the life and works of Natsume Sōseki.



Asst Prof Deborah Shamoan during the talk



NUS students reading '10 Nights of Dream'

Professor Shamoan's talk gave those in attendance a better understanding of the man behind the literature that formed a basis for Mr Fondé's exhibition. Though many had used Japanese currency before, guests only realized that Sōseki's image was printed on the 1000 yen note when Professor Shamoan pointed it out.

In addition, Professor Shamoan also introduced other famous works by Sōseki that contributed to his household success; *Kokoro*, *Botchan* and *I am a cat*, to name a few. Following Professor Shamoan's talk five students from the NUS department of Japanese studies read three chapters of both the English translated and the Japanese version of Sōseki's '10 Nights of Dream'.

The students brought to life the words on paper and gave audience members a feel of the mood of the texts. After the readings, many guests re-examined Mr Fondé's shadow calligraphy series, trying to place the engraved texts with what the students had read. Others left the event expressing great interest in Professor Shamoan's talk and some even mentioned that they intended to buy some of Sōseki's other works.

1.4 Singapore Discovery Centre Exhibitions

JCC participated in the Singapore Discovery Centre special exhibition.

This exhibition titled *“Folktales, Fables & Fantastic Futures - Stories We Share!”* focuses on the theme *“story”*, and hopes to communicate the important values that stories can inspire in people while highlighting the similarities amongst different countries.



One of the Exhibits



Visitors at the Japan Booth

Representing Japan, JCC set up a special international exhibition booth showcasing Japanese traditional stories and culture.

At the booth, visitors can view Japanese traditional artifacts relating to stories such as Noh Masks and kamishibai (paper drama).

Apart from the booth sections set up the various country embassies, visitors are able to visit the main exhibition and immerse themselves in lift-sized pop-up storybooks of various famous local and international legends and fables. This exhibition is running from April to the end of June.

Do come on down to discover the world of stories, at the same time find out what kind of Japanese folktale and exhibits our booth has in store for you

2 JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

2.1 Hachiju-Hachiya

Hachiju-hachiya literally means "88 nights," and refers to the eighty-eighth day after risshun, the first day of spring on the traditional Japanese calendar. On the modern calendar, it usually falls on May 2nd. Though, in leap year such as 2008, it is May 1st.

Quite often in April, night time temperatures can fall really low even when it's hot during the day, and it's not unusual for frost to set in.

But strangely enough, after hachiju-hachiya frost almost never appears, so rice farmers can safely begin planting seeds in rice beds.

Therefore, it's a very important day for farmers, and it started being marked on the calendar around three centuries ago. Today, though, it's become possible to plant rice a little earlier thanks to the development of sturdier strains of rice.



Tea plantation (JNTO)



Saga Prefecture/JNTO

People in Japan drink a lot of green tea in addition to the black tea that's common in Europe and North America. For Japanese tea growers, too, *hachiju-hachiya* is an important day, since the best time of the year to pick tea is during the two to three weeks starting from *hachiju-hachiya*. Moreover, the very young buds and leaves picked on *hachiju-hachiya* are especially prized as high-quality green tea, and drinking tea on this day is thought to promote long life.

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/may/88.html>

Any comments for JCC e-magazine?

We would love to hear them!

**So please do send in your suggestions and thoughts to
jcc@sn.mofa.go.jp**