

# AUGUST 2013

JAPAN  
CREATIVE  
CENTRE

EMBASSY OF JAPAN

## CULTURAL E-MAGAZINE

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 2013**

## AUGUST EVENTS IN JCC

28 August 2013 [Artist Talk: Introduction to "BUNRAKU"](#)

31 August 2013 [JCC Cinema 21 : "Departures"](#)

## SNEAK PREVIEW OF EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER 2013

2 September 2013 ["Thinking about Ikebana" Ikenobo Lecture & Workshop](#)

## RELATED EVENTS

17 May -17 November 2013 [Kindred Spirits: Dr. Sun Yat Sen, Singapore and Japan](#)

8 & 9 November 2013 [3 Titans of Theatre - MUSASHI by Yukio Ninagawa](#)

## NOTICE

[40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation](#)

[The Japan Foundation Program Guidelines for Fiscal 2013-2014](#)



## 40<sup>th</sup> YEAR OF ASEAN-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION

Further information and updates about JCC events can be found on the [JCC website](#) and [Facebook](#).



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# 1 OVERVIEW

*In July, Japan Creative Centre welcomed the talented Artist Mr. Tomoyuki Kambe from Japan to hold his first solo exhibition in Singapore. Whilst in town, Mr Kambe also presented a series of events including a Workshop for children and Masterclass based on traditional Japanese painting. A special lecture was also presented to introduce the history of traditional Japanese art and the use of traditional techniques in modern art.*

## 1.1 INNOCENT WORLD ART EXHIBITION

Tomoyuki Kambe, an emerging artist from Gifu Prefecture of Japan, held his solo exhibition entitled “Innocent World” at the Japan Creative Centre from 20 July to 3 August. This exhibition was one of JCC’s highlights of the year. Mr Kambe works with traditional materials such as natural rocks and minerals from his hometown to create the necessary pigment for painting. All his materials used to create the artworks are natural and organic, with the utmost respect and preservation for nature in mind.



*Mr Tomoyuki saying a few words*

His paintings reflect his passion for nature and the microscopic living elements which he believes makes up the essence of this world. He believes that every small detail adds up to the whole big picture.

The Opening Ceremony of “Innocent World” was held as a closed door event on 19 July 2013 at the Japan Creative Centre. Attendance was a full house with the

presence of ambassadors, high commissioners and foreign diplomatic officers. Art Gallery owners and managers as well as Singapore government officials were also present to congratulate the artist. During this event, Ambassador of Japan, His Excellency Yoichi Suzuki presented the Exhibition Opening Remarks followed by a short but heartfelt introduction by the artist Tomoyuki Kambe.

## 1.2 INNOCENT WORLD WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN



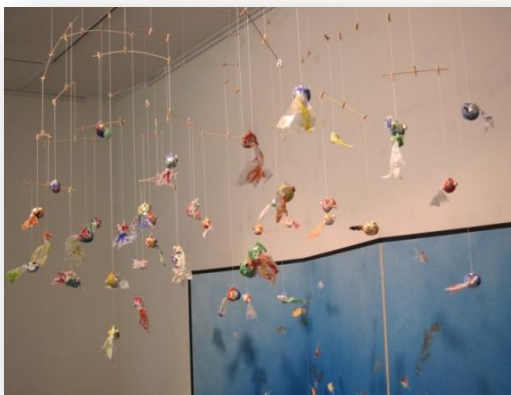
*One of our child participants whilst painting the goldfish*

traditional Japanese means of painting. For them it was the first time working with Japanese traditional materials such as gold foils and natural pigment. Thus the participants were very much excited and showed enthusiasm during the course of the workshop. Once the four goldfish were completed, Mr Kambe taught the children how to suspend the fish using sticks, miniature pegs and strings.



*Father and sons concentrating and working together to assemble the goldfish mobile*

The two hour session indeed proved to be an enjoyable one for both parents and children where much interaction and smiles were seen to be exchanged amongst the participants.



*The completed pieces were hung up with Mr Kambe's main artwork*

At the end of the session, parents and children alike worked hard into putting the goldfish mobile together. Once all the mobiles were completed, the participants gathered round to hang their pieces in front of Mr Kambe's Masterpiece titled "Wish Upon the Star". The children's works were displayed till the end of the Exhibition.



### 1.3 MR KAMBE MASTERCLASS AT SOTA

During his visit to Singapore, Mr Tomoyuki Kambe met up with future budding artists from the Visual Arts Faculty of School of The Arts (SOTA) on 23th July.



*SOTA students were shown some traditional materials used in Japanese painting*



*Students fascinated at the gold foil used in the works*

The students and teachers were thrilled to have him in their classroom and quickly warmed up to his gentle demeanor.

During the intense two and a half hour session, Mr Kambe demonstrated the Japanese traditional form of art using gold and silver foil as well as natural minerals and pigments to embellish the work. The students proceeded to try their hand at the Japanese technique of painting, and were taken in by its difference to western and modern art forms.

At the end of the session, Mr Kambe himself was amazed at the finished pieces by the students who



*Students working hard during the Masterclass*



*An amazing piece completed by a student*

also expressed much enjoyment from the Masterclass. The students were all smiles when the tough technique of applying the foils, stenciling and ironing were over and were admiring their own efforts as well as that of classmates. The teachers and students had expressed much inspiration and revelation from the Masterclass.

## 1.4 MR KAMBE LECTURE AT SOTA

On 25<sup>th</sup> July, Mr Kambe presented a lecture at School of The Arts (SOTA). There was an incredible turnout of students all awaiting to meet with the artist.

During the lecture, Mr Kambe began with a short introduction on Japanese traditional paintings and Japanese Fine Arts. He also touched upon prominent works by notable artists in Japan's history with a slideshow of paintings. Mr Kambe went on to share his inspiration to paint nature and his immense adoration for the natural world especially in the microscopic elements that thrive unnoticed each day. One of these unnoticed but fascinating moments for Mr Kambe was the large ripples that a little frog had formed from leaping into a small lake, which inspired him in one of his works. His paintings usually involve tiny wildlife and he expressed the similarity of their survival in nature to that of humans in the world. He frequently feeds and spends quite moments with these little creatures and appreciates their essence in nature.



*Mr Kambe at SOTA to present a lecture*



*Students from SOTA during the lecture by Mr Kambe*

Mr Kambe thus shared the reasons for using natural elements, minerals and pigments in his artwork. He humbly showed the students his collection of brushes and natural stones from which he makes his own paint as well as natural glue. He also presented a very special slideshow of his completed works at which the students were fascinated.

After the lecture, the students gathered around Mr Kambe to have a feel of the natural rocks and minerals. Most of the students who attended

the lecture also took the opportunity to get Mr Kambe's autograph in their sketchbooks, whilst some took individual photos with the artist. Some stayed back to ask Mr Kambe questions and gain some advice on their projects.

The lecture was indeed successful, with the teachers and students from SOTA conveying their appreciation to the artist.

## 1.5 JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST

The Japanese Speech Contest 2013 was held on 21 July at the Japanese Association Singapore. The contest was co-organized by the Japanese Association Singapore, the Japanese Cultural Society, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Japanese University Graduates Association of Singapore and the Embassy of Japan in Singapore.

This annual competition comprised of four categories; namely, the Secondary School Division, the Junior College Division, the Tertiary School Division and the Open Division. Out of the many applications received this year, the competition was tight amongst the top six finalists from each category.



*Group Photo of the final contestants with the competition organizers and judges*



*Ambassador of Japan to Singapore, His Excellency Yoichi Suzuki with the winners from each category.*

The finalists presented on topics of their free choices such as Hyakunin Isshu (Japanese traditional card game), Japanese animation and idle. They shared with audience the uniquely Singaporean point of view, and it was very interesting for the Japanese people who had attended the event. The level of competition had been so stiff that the judges themselves had some difficulty in ranking and selecting the winners.

Some of the top winners had been awarded attractive prizes including home-stay tour in Shizuoka or Hokkaido. Congratulations to the winners!



# 2 JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

## 2.1 BON HOLIDAYS

The Bon Festival <sup>1</sup> is held to pray for the repose of the souls of one's ancestors. It's one of the biggest traditional events during the year, along with New Year's. It's sometimes called o-bon or urabon. In the past, it was held in the middle of the seventh month on Japan's traditional calendar. Some regions therefore celebrate it in mid-July, although the old date is closer to mid-August.



*People send lanterns down rivers to "see off" the spirits of their relatives. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)*

Deceased family members are believed to revisit the homestead during Bon to be reunited with their family. To guide the souls back, a small bonfire is lit outside the house. This is called the *mukae-bi*, or welcoming flame. The house is cleaned and dusted, and fruits and vegetables are offered at family altars. When Bon ends, the spirits are sent off with another bonfire, called *okuri-bi*. Some regions release small lanterns down rivers or into the sea as part of the *okuri-bi* ritual.



*Everyone looks forward to Bon odori in summertime. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)*

Many Buddhist temples hold a service called *urabon'e* during this time, and so a lot of people think Bon is a Buddhist tradition. But historians now think that indigenous Japanese practices combined with Buddhist concepts to give shape to the Bon customs observed today.

The biggest event of the Bon season is the *Bon odori* (dance), which is held throughout Japan. One of the most famous is the *Awa odori* of

Tokushima. People usually go to the neighborhood park or shrine in *yukata* (summer kimono) and dance in a circle to recorded music.

Mid-August comes during summer vacation for elementary and middle school students. A lot of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/august/bon.html>

companies, too, now offer their workers time off by closing their factories and offices during

Bon. Urban residents take advantage of the holidays to return to their hometowns and participate in Bon events.

For the kids, the Bon break is a chance to visit their grandparents and meet other relatives. The beginning and end of the Bon holidays are marked long traffic jams of people leaving and returning to their urban residences. Airports and major train stations become jam packed with travelers, and expressways leading in and out of big cities get clogged up for 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) or more. Shinkansen (bullet trains) and other long-distance trains often run at 180% of capacity.

**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](mailto:jcc@sn.mofa.go.jp).**