

**SEPTEMBER  
2013**

JAPAN  
CREATIVE  
CENTRE

EMBASSY OF JAPAN

**CULTURAL E-MAGAZINE**



© Japan Photo Encyclopedia 2005

# UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2013

## SEPTEMBER EVENTS IN JCC

2-Sep-13	<a href="#">"Thinking about Ikebana" Lecture &amp; Workshop</a>
28-Sep-13	JCC Cinema 22: From Up on Poppy Hill

## SNEAK PREVIEW INTO OCTOBER'S EVENTS

22-Oct-13	<a href="#">WASABI: The Spirit of Japan: The Sound of Traditional Instruments @ Genexis Theatre (Fusionopolis)</a>
-----------	--

## SUPPORTED EVENTS

26, 28 & 29 Sept 2013	<a href="#">Songs from Singapore to Tohoku 2013</a>
19-Oct-13	<a href="#">Mari Fujiwara Cello Recital for Family</a>

## RELATED EVENTS

17 May - 17 Nov 2013	<a href="#">Kindred Spirits: Dr. Sun Yat Sen, Singapore and Japan</a>
6 August – 29 Sept 2013	<a href="#">Birth and Death Bridge @ Mizuma Gallery</a>
28 – 31 Aug & 4 -7 Sept 2013	<a href="#">Mobile 2: Flat Cities</a>
4 Sept – 30 Nov 2013	<a href="#">MAIKO @ Nikei Fine Arts</a>
6 Sept – 6 Oct 2013	<a href="#">About Him @ Tomio Koyama Gallery</a>
6 Sept – 13 Oct 2013	<a href="#">Nakakiyo No Entakukei @ Ota Fine Arts</a>
7 Sept – 12 Oct 2013	<a href="#">Mikito Ozeki "Paper Cut Works" @ Ikkan Art</a>
8 & 9 Nov 2013	<a href="#">3 Titans of Theatre - MUSASHI by Yukio Ninagawa</a>

## NOTICE

<a href="#">40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation</a>
<a href="#">The Japan Foundation Program Guidelines for Fiscal 2013-2014</a>



## 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](#).



# CONTENTS

## OVERVIEW OF JCC'S PAST EVENTS IN AUGUST 2013

- 1.1 ARTIST TALK: INTRODUCTION TO BUNRAKU ..... Page 3
- 1.2 JCC CINEMA 21: DEPARTURES ..... Page 5

## JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

- 2.1 YABUSAME AT TSURUGAOKA HACHIMAN SHRINE..... Page 6

# 1 OVERVIEW

*In the month of August, Japan Creative Centre held a special artist talk on one of Japan's unique traditional performing art forms, "Bunraku". The Oscars award-winning film "Departures" was also screened in JCC towards the end of the month.*

*The centre also embarked on the preparation for the upcoming JCC Sustainable Fashion Design Contest which is held in October. Having been organized for the third year in a row, the Fashion exhibition will feature the winning garments. During this crucial time, JCC works carefully in the selection and judging of new design applications from both Japan and Singapore schools together with a panel of judges from various organizations.*

## 1.1 ARTIST TALK: INTRODUCTION TO BUNRAKU

On 28 August, Japan Creative Centre held an Artist Talk on Bunraku. This over 400 years old art form is viewed as one of the most significant traditional performing art forms in Japan, designated as a World Intangible Heritage by UNESCO in 2003. Mr Yoshida Kanya, a puppeteer from Bunraku Kyokai (Bunraku Association) was present for the artist talk to enlighten the audience who patronized the event with much information as well as a brief history of Bunraku. Mr Yoshida spoke about the significance of coordination and control of the almost life-sized puppets fully adorned in Japanese kimono and embellishments.



*Mr Yoshida demonstrating the puppet movement*



*Mr Yoshida demonstrating the puppet movement*

From the session, it was explained that each puppet is controlled by 3 persons and synchronization of the head and body movements of the puppet requires decades of training and precision. Mr Yoshida demonstrated the positions of the head and body of the puppet in instances where the puppet is made to appear sad or crying. To emphasize crying, the puppeteer is made to stomp its feet to create the effect of crying.

During the talk, Mr Yoshida presented a female puppet and demonstrated the position and movements of the puppet. Videos of

traditional puppet shows in Japan were also played to give the guests some idea of its presence in Japan.

During this exclusive session, some guests participated in trying out the movements of the puppets and others were given the rare opportunity to touch and play with the puppets as well. JCC saw much excitement and awe from guests as they took photographs with the puppets after the session.



## 1.2 JCC CINEMA: DEPARTURES

JCC screened “Departures” which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2009. The film concerns a cellist-turned-encoffineer, Daigo, who prepares deceased bodies for burial and entry into the next life. While his wife and others despise the job, Daigo takes a certain pride in his work and begins to perfect the art of "Nokanshi", acting as a gentle gatekeeper between life and death, between the departed and the family of the departed.

Though the movie handles deaths, there were many humourous scenes which brought laughter and smiles amongst our guests. This heartfelt film indeed attracted a full house of people from all walks of life.

As a creative segment of JCC Cinema, a short sharing session was held after the movie featuring Mr. Gavin Liu from the Singapore Film Society. During this session, Mr Liu shared with the audience on elements such as Yamagata, where the film was set. He also touched on universal themes such as the elderly, unemployment in the arts and the trend amongst the young in Japan moving from country areas such as Yamagata to more urbanized areas like Tokyo for employment. He also shared with the audience the aspects of Departures that might have brought it to be recognized as Oscar Winning.

Our guests also had much of their own thoughts on the movie as they shared their own experiences and appreciation of the film.



*During the movie screening*

## 2 JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

### 2.1 YABUSAME AT TSURUGAOKA HACHIMAN SHRINE

Every year from September 14 to 16, a grand festival is held at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura, 45 kilometers (28 miles) southwest of Tokyo. The highlight comes on the final day, when a yabusame<sup>1</sup> (mounted archery) ceremony is held. The ritual is a page right out of history, and is a symbol of this ancient city.

In the yabusame ceremony, archers on horseback shoot at three wooden targets about 50 centimeters (20 inches) square and 1 centimeter (3/8 inch) thick while speeding along at full gallop. The targets are placed around 70 meters (77 yards) apart, so the riders must draw arrows in quick succession if they want to hit all three. Each time an arrow makes a hit, a big roar goes up from the crowd, followed by applause. Sometimes the shots cause the target to shatter, making a big cracking noise.



*A mounted archer aims for the target.  
(Shonan Advertising Inc.)*

The yabusame at Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine features 21 riders in all. The first 3 are clad in the hunting gear of the Kamakura period (1185-1333), while the remaining 18 are attired in the samurai dress of the Edo period (1603-1868).

Kamakura became the seat of the shogunate (military government) in 1192, when Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199) was named shogun, and continued to serve as the center of rule by military clans for about 150 years. Horsemanship and archery were highly valued skills. Yoritomo himself was an enthusiastic practitioner of both, charging across fields and hills on horseback and hunting for game with a bow and arrow. Yabusame is a ritual that combines these two skills. In 1187, it was performed before Yoritomo to pray for a peaceful rule. This was the first time it was held in Kamakura, although it had been around for hundreds of years by then.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/september/yabusame.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](mailto:jcc@sn.mofa.go.jp).**