

June
2014

CULTURAL E-MAGAZINE



UPCOMING EVENTS

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UPCOMING EVENTS IN JCC

31.05.2014 - 21.06.2014	Exhibition : Beauty of KŌGEL: Art Crafts in Japan
26.06.2014-11.07.2014	Japanese Film Festival 2014 @ National Museum of Singapore

SUPPORTED EVENTS

31.05.2014 - 27.07.2014	New Sensibilities in Sculpture and Painting
20.07.2014	Concert HIBIKIⅣ

RELATED EVENTS

01.04.2014 - 30.06.2014	Fables, Folktales and Fantastic Future - Stories We Share
30.05.2014- 27.07.2014	CERTAINTY / ENTROPY Exhibition By Aiko Tezuka
20.06.2014-23.06.2014	Shamisen Workshop by Mr. Baisho Matsumoto
28.06.2014	Japanese Band Alice Nine 1st Asia Tour to Singapore
13.07.2014	Genki! J-Pop Night 2014
06.09.2014	Enra Japanese Contemporary at Samarpana Festival
19.09.2014-21.09.2014	Miyake Daiko Workshop by Miyakejima Geino Doshikai

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

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Calligraphy Art Work by NAGATA Bunsho

1 OVERVIEW

The month of May welcomed Her Excellency Minister Inada Tomomi from Japan to JCC as well as “NHN: Change the World Exhibition”, held at JCC, featuring works of three artists from different generations and backgrounds. The artists were also present every day of the exhibition to interact with visitors and give personal explanations about their works. Also held as part of the exhibition was an Artist talk by two of the artists to explain more about their and the inspiration behind them.

1.1 “NHN: Change the World” Exhibition

“NHN : Change the World” was an exhibition put forward by a collective of three artists, Mr Nagata Bunsho, Mr Haioka Shintaro and Mr Nakano Yasuhiro. The three artists come from different generations and hail from diversified backgrounds. About twenty of Mr Nagata’s works were featured in the exhibition alongside four of Mr Nakano’s motion paintings and Mr Haioka’s original music.



The 3 Artists: NAKANO Yasuhiro, NAGATA Bunsho & HAIOKA Shintaro



Haioka explaining Nagata's Works

numerous music videos, television commercials and movie trailers. Using his professional skills, Mr Nakano creates a new artistic form by mixing traditional *sumi* art with moving graphics.

Held for the first time in Singapore, “NHN: Change the World”, brought forth a fresh perspective with the fusion of traditional and modern art forms. About twenty of Mr Nagata’s works were showcased in the exhibition alongside four of Mr Nakano’s motion paintings and Mr Haioka’s original music.

The initial sparks of NHN, began when Mr Nakano and Mr Haioka who had been previously acquainted, showed each other what they had been working on. However, it was only later after meeting Mr Nagata that the formation of NHN came about. The common stokes shared by Mr Nagata and Mr Nakano in their works, showed the artists that with the combined power of their art forms, they could create something rather magnificent.

In later part of 2012, NHN was formed with the intention of sharing Japanese culture with all who come into contact with their work. Apart from this, NHN also serves as a platform to share the artists’ desire to change the world beginning with the world of an individual. As complex and philosophical as it seems, the artists believe that “art transcends generations” and although their works are combined, they share a common message. Upon walking through the door of the exhibition, one was greeted with the original compositions of Mr Haioka playing through the speakers, with Mr Nagata’s calligraphy coming into view soon after. Mr Haioka took a rather personal approach with regards to the music of the exhibition; the shifts in pace and the pieces that he played changed depending on visitors to the exhibition.



Nakano explaining his motion paintings

Upon walking through the door of the exhibition, one was greeted with the original compositions of Mr Haioka playing through the speakers, with Mr Nagata’s calligraphy coming into view soon after. Mr Haioka took a rather personal approach with regards to the music of the exhibition; the shifts in pace and the pieces that he played changed depending on visitors to the exhibition.

“If they’re walking too fast, I play calming music to make them feel relaxed. So that they can take their time and view the exhibition” Mr Haioka said with a grin when asked about his varying music tracks.

Mr Haioka's music transitions as visitors proceeded to the next room to view Mr Nakano's motion paintings. The transitions of Mr Haioka's music enabled visitors to experience a change in worlds as they journeyed from Mr Nagata's traditional calligraphy to Mr Nakano's progressive motion paintings. Following its exhibition at JCC, "NHN: Change the world" exhibition will be held at Mulan Gallery till the end of the month.

1.2 Artist Talk

As part of "NHN: Change the World" exhibition, an artist talk was held in JCC on the third of May. It was the perfect opportunity for interested guests to get a deeper insight into the world of Mr



Nakano giving a talk on his artistic background

Nakano and Mr Haioka. Mr Nakano explained that to create his motion paintings, he first draws a line on paper using *sumi* ink. Following which, he creates 3D computer graphics using what he has drawn. After that is done, he mixes them up on his computer and put them on loop to create an animated effect. The unique feature of his work is the combined use of still drawings using *sumi* ink and computer graphics.

Through this combination, Mr Nakano is able to choose the parts of the picture that would be in motion and the sections that would be still.

Mr Haioka spoke about his involvement in electronic bands like "Bremen" and "The Kah" and his love for instrumental music. He became interested in traditional Japanese music after a visit to his grandmother's. He has stated the importance of human connection through music, which prompted him to produce his music onto vinyl records as well as thumb drives.



Nakano & Haioka during a Q & A session

Mr Haioka first plays music on the *koto* (Japanese traditional stringed instrument) and records it using different techniques to create the right sound electronically.

Mr Haioka is an avid DJ who has played in various music festivals and clubs. Yet he also insists that he enjoys traditional and classical music.

As Mr Nagata was unable to be in Singapore for the duration of the exhibition, Mr Nakano and Mr Haioka explained Mr Nagata's works to the audience on his behalf.

The fluid strokes of Mr Nagata's calligraphy captured the attention of many who saw it and visitors often gazed at the works to find the deeper spiritual meaning behind the characters. When asked about Mr Nagata's works, the common reply given by those that visited the exhibition was that there was something innately profound about his works that resonated differently within each person.

1.3 H.E. Minister Inada Tomomi's visit to JCC

On the 4th of May, H.E. Minister Inada Tomomi visited JCC on her way to the National Design Centre for her lecture on "Cool Japan Strategy". Amongst those present at JCC to receive Minister Inada, were Mr Nakano and Mr Haioka. The artists were more than honoured to give Minister Inada a tour of the exhibition with explanations about the works. Minister Inada was also delighted when Mr Haioka presented her with a signed thumb drive containing the music that he had specially composed for the exhibition.



H.E. Minister Inada Tomomi congratulating Haioka and Nakano

2 JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

2.1 Outings to View Traditional Theatre

Kids today do not have many opportunities to see traditional theatrical performances. Many middle and high schools, therefore, schedule outings to see live performances of traditional stage arts in the hopes of piquing students' interest in traditional culture.



Live performance of stage Arts

Kids rarely get a chance to see live performances of traditional stage arts like *noh* these days. (Tokyo Metropolitan Government)

Like field trips and school excursions, these outings are made by the entire grade or school. In and around Tokyo, most students go to see performances of kabuki or noh. But in rural areas, outings may be made to view traditional arts unique to that locality.



Front entrance of the National Theatre

These performances are usually preceded by an explanation to help the students understand what is going on and to make the performance more enjoyable. For most students, this is their first exposure to live traditional theatre, and they become wrapped up in the performance.

Many schools in the greater Tokyo area visit the National Theatre, located near the Imperial Palace. The theatre sponsors special kabuki performances for middle and high school students complete with commentary during two months in spring and another two months in the fall. A 30-minute introduction to kabuki is given, followed by explanations of key scenes and special stage effects. The students then sit back to enjoy a kabuki play, usually a rousing piece with an easy-to-understand plot.

These "kabuki appreciation classrooms" allow young students to deepen their knowledge of a traditional stage art while also enabling them to see a first-rate performance. Some schools from even outside the Tokyo region schedule visits to the theatre for this rare and valuable experience.

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/calendar/june/kansho.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**