

**JAN/FEB
2014**

**JAPAN
CREATIVE
CENTRE**

EMBASSY OF JAPAN

CULTURAL E-MAGAZINE



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan/Feb 2014

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS IN JCC

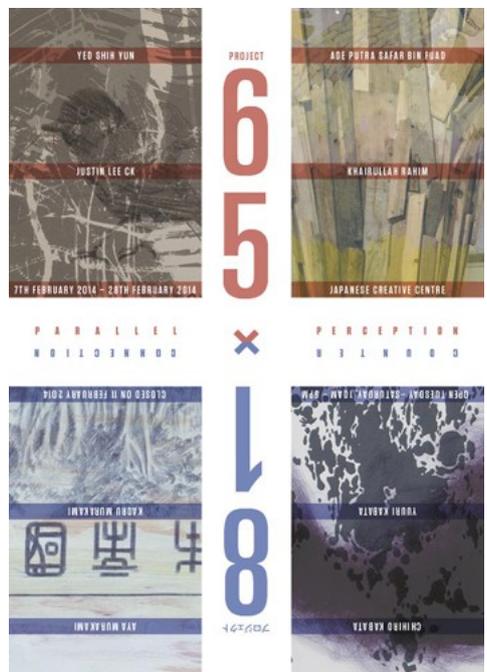
25 Jan 2014	JCC Cinema 25: Udon
8 - 28 Feb 2014	PROJECT 6581 - Parallel Perception And Counter Connection (Exhibition)

SUPPORTED EVENTS

13 Feb 2014	Shinosuke Rakugo 2014
18 - 19 Mar 2014	Akiko Kitamura Dance Performance
20 Mar 2014	Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra World Tour 2014

RELATED EVENTS

10 Jan - 16 Feb 2014	The Fish Glitters As its Scales Tremble (Exhibition)
17 Jan - 2 Mar 2014	Tomoko Kashiki (Exhibition)
22 Mar 2014	Culture Clash Festival



'PROJECT 6581 - Parallel Perception And Counter Connection'

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

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2 OVERVIEW

Towards the end of 2013, JCC held a Calligraphy Exhibition and Demonstration that revealed the beauty of calligraphy and Japanese characters.

At the start of 2014, Dancer/Choreographer Mr. Kaiji Moriyama visited Singapore and the students of LASALLE to impart some of his dance inspiration ideas for choreography. JCC also held a movie screening “Udon” towards the end of the month.

2.1 “A CHAIN OF CHANGES OF JAPANESE IN CALLIGRAPHY” & “ANCIENT LETTERS” EXHIBITION

“A Chain of Changes of Japanese in Calligraphy” & “Ancient Letters” Exhibition was held from 3 - 7 December at Japan Creative Centre (JCC). The Opening Ceremony was held on 3 December where Director of JCC, Mr Toshihide Ando presented the welcome remarks for the exhibition. During this ceremony Mdm Atsuko Osa - the artist of the exhibition - provided a brief introduction to her works.

The Exhibition itself featured calligraphy works by Mdm Atsuko Osa, a retired Junior High School Teacher who began to rediscover calligraphy that she had learnt from her father, Seisui Toyoda. She progressed onto learning and exploring many styles of calligraphy and even studied from the famous Kang Yin in China. Since then she has exhibited her works in many countries.

Though it was the first time for JCC to house a calligraphy exhibition, it was indeed a refreshing and unique experience for visitors. It was a rare opportunity to go back in time and journey through the changes of ancient letters in the art form. It also enabled guests to immerse themselves in a world where the calligrapher brings to life the words on paper.



Visitor viewing the exhibition pieces

2.2 “A CHAIN OF CHANGES OF JAPANESE IN CALLIGRAPHY” & “ANCIENT LETTERS” LECTURE & DEMONSTRATION



Mdm Osa sharing on the historical evolution of characters

Madam Osa conducted a Lecture and Demonstration session at JCC on 7 December. During this session, she introduced her style of works and her previous exhibitions done in various other countries to increase the awareness and beauty of calligraphy. She gave a talk on the history and origins of the characters and how they evolved over time to become the characters that they are today. The transitioning and discoveries of the letters on historical artefacts and in places around the world that she personally encountered was also shared with guests who attended the event.

Much of the lecture included historical elements tied in with the evolution of characters from Chinese writings to the current Japanese script. Madam Osa shared slide shows of characters and the time period of the letters including that from the Heian period.

After the lecture, she provided a demonstration on how the characters were written. The dying process done through a traditional process was also touched upon and she mentioned that it is crucial to complete the paper dying process first before laying on the calligraphy script.

Much of the history and story behind the characters shared by her shed light on the wonders and hidden beauty of calligraphy despite it being less practiced in modern times due to computer scripts and technological advancement.



Demonstration by Mdm Osa

2.3 KAIJI MORIYAMA WORKSHOP AT LASALLE

As a collaborative project with the Faculty of Performing Arts, Lasalle College of the Arts, JCC co-organized a workshop by Japanese Dancer / Choreographer Kaiji Moriyama. The said workshop was held at the college on 16 January for the students of the School of Dance under the Faculty of Performing Arts.

Born in 1973, Mr Moriyama is a fast growing Contemporary Dancer and Choreographer who initially embarked on his career with a musical theatre company in Japan. With his self-produced and choreographed solo performance "KATANA", he was reviewed by The New York Times as "an amazing dancer", and was invited to the Venice Biennale 2007.



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Mr Moriyama has attained much success in his profession, having worked with a number of leading contemporary dance companies and is well reputed for his performance at the 2001 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where he was described as "One of the most talented dancers". His style is known to involve the use of traditional Japanese materials such as the performance with a Noh play motif.

He has a strong presence in today's dance scene because of his unique style of expanding the playing field by moving freely across every genre such as theaters, visual arts, fashion and photographs and keeping up a creative activity. He visited Indonesia, Vietnam and now Singapore as a Japan Cultural Envoy 2013 of the Agency for Cultural Affairs.



Dance students working hard

During the workshop at Lasalle, he interacted with students, introducing them to his unique style of Dance Choreography.

Mr Moriyama began with the essence of the workshop by introducing Japanese Hiragana and Calligraphy. Writing the character 'あ' or 'a' on the whiteboard, he encouraged the students to use their bodies to illustrate this character.

Along these lines, Moriyama continued the session with another character 'め' or 'me' to form the word 'あめ' or 'ame' which translates to 'rain' in Japanese. The students then illustrated the word using their bodies. Moriyama also encouraged the students to synchronize their movements with the music. He asked the students to follow their own timing and rhythmic movements according to the music without rushing the choreography.

The students were asked to dance in groups of five using their newly learnt choreography set which Moriyama inspected and gave suggestions accordingly.

2.4 KAIJI MORIYAMA DEMONSTRATION AT LASALLE



Mr Moriyama during 'LIVE BONE'

On 17 January, Mr Moriyama performed "LIVE BONE" at the Campus Green of Lasalle College of the Arts. In a comical and unique dance display, students from all over Lasalle without restriction to the School of Dance, seemed intrigued by the performance.

The "LIVE BONE" dance which was choreographed by Mr. Moriyama, is a metaphorical expression of the bones and internal organs. Since December

2010 when "LIVE BONE" was first premiered, Mr Moriyama has performed over 10 cities throughout Japan and in Denpasar, Jakarta and Singapore in January 2014 .

The dance first begins with Mr Moriyama's entrance in the "Bone" costume where he does a few rounds and interactive movements with the audience. Different skeletal forms of internal organs are placed, and this displays the significance and functions of the organ in a manner of choreography.

He engaged the audience into the dance by placing the various organ pieces on unsuspecting, nearby students. After the full performance, the students who received the ornamental pieces were invited to stand and form a circle, holding hands with Mr Moriyama to suggest the combination of the various organs to form a whole body. Many laughs were exchanged amongst the audiences.



Dancing with the students of Lasalle

2.5 JCC CINEMA 25 : UDON

As the first JCC Cinema in 2014, JCC screened 'Udon', a light-hearted comedy film about the distant relationship between a strict, no-nonsense noodlemaking father and his ambitious son. The story is set in Sanuki of the Kagawa Prefecture, Japan which is famous for its Sanuki Udon.

The main feature of the film being Udon, JCC invited a guest speaker Mr Akihiko Koga from Tamoya, one of the most popular Udon chain of restaurants in Singapore.



During the movie screening of Udon



Mr Koga sharing on the history of Udon

Founded in 1996 in Sanuki, Kagawa Prefecture by "Udon Champion" Tamotsu Kurokawa, Tamoya has currently 18 outlets in total with 15 in Japan and 3 in Singapore. Mr Koga enlightened guests on the history of Udon as well as on the charm of Sanuki Udon which is much loved in Japan for its unique taste and chewy noodles. He revealed that in different parts of Japan, different kinds and varieties of Udon. He also shared the

special process of making Udon through a short video clip.

At the end of the session, guests expressed much fascination by Tamoya and Sanuki Udon and many confessed to be going down to the outlets to taste the reputed dish.

Well known Japanese media NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), was also present to cover the event. Some guests even got the opportunity to be interviewed.



NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) interviewing guests

3 JAPANESE CULTURAL FACT OF THE MONTH

3.1 NEW YEAR'S DAY

January 1 is New Year's Day, a national holiday and one of the biggest events on the calendar of annual festivities in Japan. Schools close for about two weeks of winter holiday before and after New Year's, and most companies also shut down for New Year break from around December 30 to January 3. Many people

who've moved to big cities return home for the holidays to be with their family and friends.



*Lining up for the first prayers of the year.
(Tokyo Metropolitan Government)*

From well before dawn on New Year's Day, people flock to shrines and temples to pray for a healthy and happy year. This is called *hatsu-mode* and is one of the most important rituals of the year. When we greet our acquaintances, moreover, we say "*Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu*" (a happy new year) to convey our wishes that the year to come will be full of hope and good health.

Special meals called *osechi ryori*, prepared at the end of the year before, are eaten on January 1-3. They consist of traditional dishes like boiled beans, broiled fish, and *su-no-mono* (sliced vegetables and seafood dressed with sweet vinegar), and it's served in a nest of boxes. The reason boxes are used is because they can easily be preserved by stacking, freeing people from the need to do any cooking over the holidays.

Until about a few decades ago, kids spent New Year's engaged in such traditional pastimes as flying kites, *koma* (spinning tops), and playing *iroha karuta* (a traditional Japanese card game), *hanetsuki* (a type of badminton played with wooden paddles and shuttlecocks), *fuku warai* (a contest where blindfolded players take turns arranging parts of a face), and *sugoroku* (Japanese variety parcheesi). None of these pastimes are played very much by kids these days, though.

One thing children look forward to doing on New Year morning is reading *nengajo* (New Year greeting cards) from friends and acquaintances. But the biggest treat, no doubt, is receiving *otoshidama* (money given as a gift at the beginning of a year) from parents, relatives, and other adults they meet during New Year.



New Year's dishes filled with "good luck-bringing" foods

**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.**