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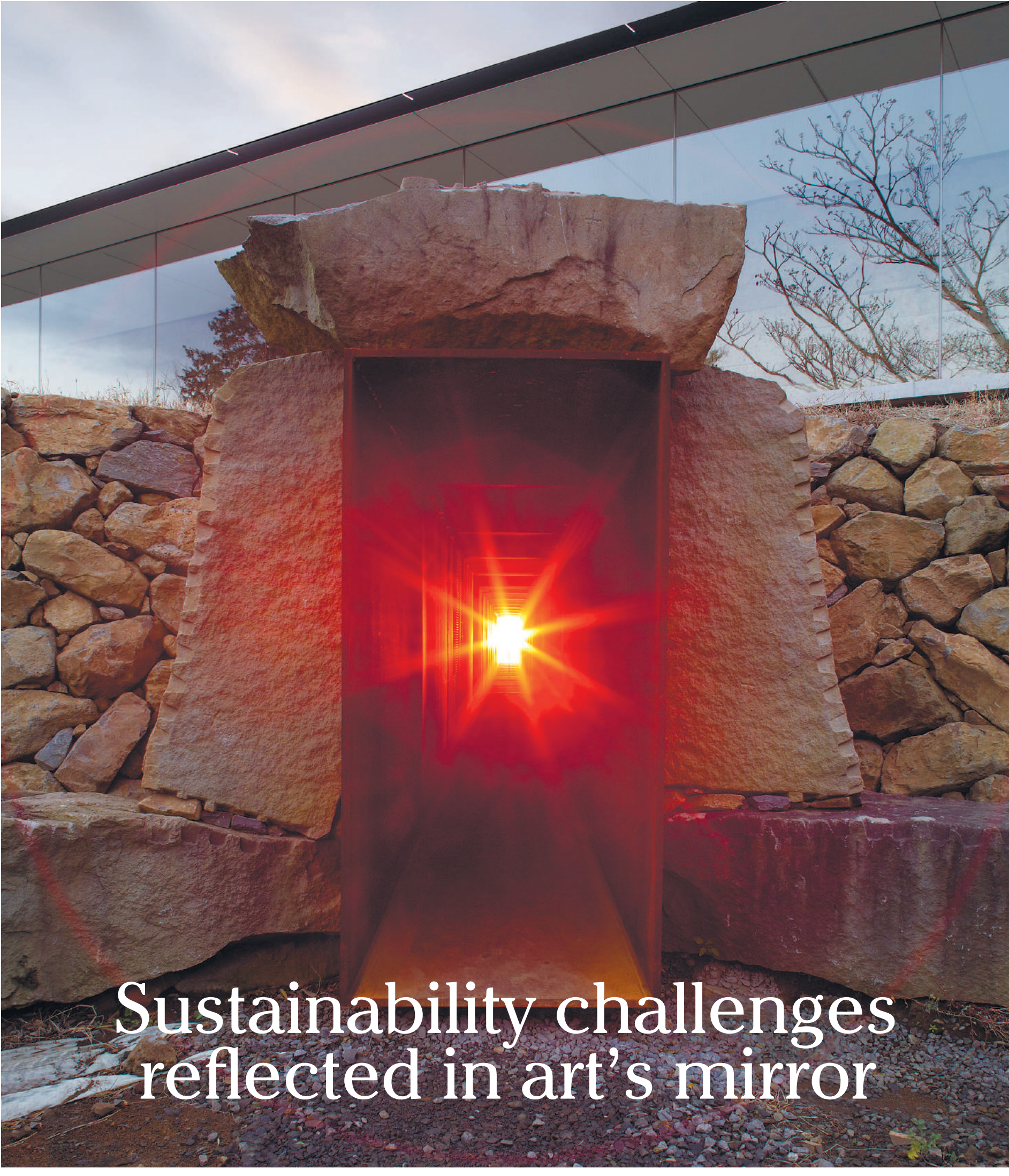
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ESG / SDGs

SUSTAINABLE JAPAN

MAGAZINE

Saturday, September 25, 2021



Sustainability challenges  
reflected in art's mirror



PHOTOS: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI



Enoura Observatory's Kasekkutsu (Fossil Cave) is a collection of fossils Sugimoto assembled in New York. Here they are housed in a converted farm shed.

Feature | ART

# PEOPLE

## In a grove, Hiroshi Sugimoto creates a place out of time

By YOSHIO SUZUKI

### HIROSHI SUGIMOTO

Hiroshi Sugimoto was born in Tokyo in 1948. After graduating from Rikkyo University, he moved to the United States, where he graduated from the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles before starting to work as an artist in New York City in 1974. As a contemporary artist, he has held solo exhibitions at museums around the world. In 2009, he launched his architectural design office, the New Material Research Laboratory, in Tokyo. In the same year, he received the 21st Praemium Imperiale. In 2010 he received the Medal with Purple Ribbon. In 2009, he established the Odawara Art Foundation.



The glass stage with amphitheater seating. The auditorium is a full-size re-creation of a ruined Roman amphitheater in Ferento in the Lazio region of Italy.

Hear the name Enoura Observatory and you probably imagine a facility for astronomy. But in truth this place in the Kanagawa Prefecture city of Odawara is a little different. Just over a decade ago, the land where it now stands was a *mikan* citrus grove overlooking the Pacific, not unlike many others in the area. Since then, several buildings and a noh stage have been constructed, a garden has been established and it has been reborn as a reservation-only destination for the appreciation of art and architecture. Enoura Observatory was designed by contemporary artist Hiroshi Sugimoto. He named it “observatory” because in various ways it lets visitors observe and experience the winter and summer solstices and spring and autumn equinoxes as humans have for millennia. Once a year, for example, on the winter solstice the sun’s rays will shine straight into a specially designed 70-meter-long tunnel. The winter solstice has long been

recognized in various religions and cultures throughout the world as a day symbolizing death and rebirth. Every day, the sun rises and sets. The Earth moves around the sun little by little and returns to its original place in the course of one year. Seasons change. Through observation, human beings come to realize that they too are a part of nature, and thereby their consciousness grows and they are awakened to the daily or annual tasks that they should perform. This practice has long stood humans in good stead when hunting or farming. There was one other question that inspired Sugimoto’s design for Enoura Observatory: “Sooner or later, civilization will come to an end. When it does, what beauty will this place retain as it transforms into an archaeological site?” At the point of creation, Sugimoto looked ahead to the building’s ruin. What other architect would do that? Sugimoto’s approach to architecture clearly differs from others’. Buildings are





The “Seascapes” series, in which Sugimoto attempted to capture scenery as it may have been witnessed in ancient times, is one of his masterpieces. Viewing the photos is like traveling back in time.



The gallery is 100 meters in length and points in the direction of the summer solstice sunrise.

usually at their most beautiful upon completion, before gradually aging and deteriorating. But he wanted to make something whose presence would be enhanced over time.

Sugimoto, who works in this way on his own architectural projects and occasionally directs traditional Japanese performing arts such as *ningyō jōruri* puppet theater and *noh*, made his debut as an artist in the late 1970s working in photography. He went on to leave his mark in art history as one of the artists who made photography a form of art.

One of his masterpieces is his “Seascapes” series, which he shot at locations around the world and which consist of photographs divided in half by the horizon, with the sky in the upper half and the sea in the lower half.

Sugimoto says the catalyst for the work was the question, “How might it be possible for us today to gaze on the same scenery that ancient people once saw?” In a way, the task he set for himself was to capture eternity in a single image.

“Usually we think about things based

on time frames that are familiar in our own lifetimes, so generally in 10- or 20-year blocks,” he said. “But it is important to think about other time scales, some being much, much longer. From the point of view of our planet, it is only a moment between the appearance of human beings and the present. Or, considering the cycle of the ice ages since the appearance of human beings, disease spread when it was hot, and when it became cool people thrived. When we think about sustainability, we should be incorporating these long time scales and perspectives.”

It is usually difficult for a person to comprehend periods of time that far exceed their own life, like hundreds of years, or thousands, or more. However, when Sugimoto captures them in art or architecture, he makes us feel we have something in common with ancient people, and he gives us a sense of mankind’s eternal toil following the rhythm of the celestial bodies. This is one of the fundamental joys in his work.

So how did Sugimoto start this journey of changing the scale of time?

“When I was a boy, I was given a telescope, so I used to look at the stars at night, and the planets. Back in the late 1950s you could see stars in Tokyo. Also, there was a time when I was absorbed in model railroads. I made dioramas with model trains, and that was like my way of understanding the real world. In contrast, when dealing with reality I would often feel I was suffering visual hallucinations.”

By immersing himself in dioramas and comparing them with the real world, Sugimoto was able to grasp his place, and the kind of environment he was in. The Enoura Observatory is perhaps a new embodiment of that process.

Sugimoto named this hilly area on Sagami Bay, including the Enoura Observatory, Kankitsu-zan (Mount Citrus) and in 2011 he established the agricultural corporation Shokubutsu to Ningen (Arts and Agriculture) to maintain the surrounding

lands. With declining population meaning many properties lacked successors to care for them, abandoned land was becoming widespread. This in an area that the German architect and town planner Bruno Taut had once visited and dubbed the “Oriental Riviera.” Sugimoto could not bear the thought of letting such a location go to waste.

Here too, his free sense of time has been useful. Shokubutsu to Ningen has the mission to reaffirm the relationship between agriculture and human culture from the birth of the human race till the present day, and to maintain a sustainable coexistence between them in the future. Over the last 20 to 30 years, the land has been abandoned, and mikans have grown and fallen. The volunteers who took care of the trees have aged.

And so it became necessary to establish the agricultural corporation. Its activities include pesticide-free cultivation of some 20 varieties of citrus fruit, holding experiential events featuring encounters with nature and agriculture, research into agricultural land utilization and land maintenance, development of human resources, and agricultural education projects. There is also a plan to open a cafe on the Kankitsu-zan site that will offer drinks and food using pesticide-free citrus fruits. It will be used as a place for experimentation to address food waste.

Also, if you experienced the food shortages at the end of the war in 1945, or if you are even just conscious of how natural disasters can result in crop failures or supply chain problems, then it is natural that you might worry you will need to make your own food at some point. Sugimoto sees these projects as a way to prepare for such a time.

Knowing the season from the position of the sun, looking out to the sea in the distance, seeing the various crops growing at your feet. Enter this place and you are sure to feel that you are alive within, and together with, nature.

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COVER PHOTO

Enoura Observatory was created by world-renowned contemporary artist Hiroshi Sugimoto in Odawara, Kanagawa Prefecture. When the sun rises over the sea on the winter solstice, its rays shine directly down the observatory’s 70-meter-long tunnel.

PHOTO: ODAWARA ART FOUNDATION



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● Summary

杉本博司の、人類の原点に立ち返るアートサイトへ。

神奈川県小田原市。相模湾を望む丘に建つ〈江之浦測候所〉は、現代美術作家で建築家の杉本博司による設計である。もともとはみかん畑だった土地に、古代の天体観測装置のように機能する建築物や能舞台、茶室、ギャラリーなどを配している。杉本の生み出す美術作品も建築も悠久の時を思考することで

成り立っている。画面上半分が空、下半分が海という同じ構図で世界中の海を捉えた「海景」は、古代の人々と現代の我々が同じものを見ることが可能か、という自問自答が元になっている。〈江之浦測候所〉を含む山を杉本は「柑橘山」と名付け、隣地に農業法人「植物と人間」も設立。耕作放棄された農地を活性

化させ、農業不使用の農作物を作り、農業の今後に対して様々な取り組みが行われている。測候所では太陽の位置が暦や季節を示し、地面には作物が成る。人間はその天と地の間で生かされている。人間は自然と共にあることを再確認し、体感する。ここではそのように持続可能な世界を考えることができる。





Seiichi Saito (director of Panoramatiks and executive director of Abstract Engine) produces these two art festivals, held in Nara Prefecture and on the island of Sarushima. Together with people in the respective communities and participating artists, Saito seeks new formats for art festivals.

Feature | ART

# TRAVEL

## Two art festivals bring viewers to their senses in nature

By CHIE SUMIYOSHI



Sarushima (meaning Monkey Island) is an uninhabited island so small that it takes just 40 minutes or so to walk around its perimeter. According to legend, a white monkey guided the priest Nichiren to the island. At one time Sarushima was also called Perry Island, as Commodore Matthew Perry's fleet passed close by when it came to Japan.

COURTESY: SENSE ISLAND SARUSHIMA DARK MUSEUM 2021

COURTESY: SENSE ISLAND SARUSHIMA DARK MUSEUM 2021



Sarushima is also known for its war ruins, including Meiji Era gun batteries. Because the island was off-limits to the public until the end of World War II, its ecosystems have remained unchanged.

### Sense Island: Sarushima Dark Museum 2021

Sarushima is a small uninhabited island located 10 minutes by ferry from Yokosuka and only about 90 minutes from Tokyo. A circuit around the island takes about 40 minutes on foot. Set on Sarushima, this festival takes place in the dark of night, starting at sunset on weekends. Festival visitors are required to turn off their mobile phones before arriving on the island. Sarushima is known for its war ruins, including the remains of gun batteries from the Meiji Era, and members of the public were not allowed on the island until after the end of World War II. As a result, the island's natural plant and animal habitats have remained untouched and unchanged. The only sounds on the island are comfortable sounds not heard in the city — waves, plants swaying in the wind, the scurrying of small animals. The artists featured in the festival — including Kazuto Imura, Shun Onozawa, Koichiro Kutsuna, Yasuaki Kakeh, Seiichi

Saito, Tohru Nakazaki, Miyu Hosoi, Mamoru and Yuko Mori — will show works that incorporate the environment and darkness of Sarushima.

Festival period: mid-January, 2022 (Fridays/Saturdays/Sundays/public holidays)  
Festival sites open at sunset.  
Locations: around Sarushima  
<https://senseisland.com>

PHOTO: NAOMI CIRCUS



From an exhibit at the festival in 2019. The work is by artist Yasuhiro Suzuki.

### ● Summary

自然と哲学が共鳴し合う  
この秋の2つの芸術祭。

クリエイティブディレクターの齋藤精一がプロデュースする2つの芸術祭は環境問題に向き合う絶好の機会となる。神奈川県横須賀市の無人島・猿島を舞台とする芸術祭「Sense Island 感覚の島 暗闇の美術館」では、週末の夜フェリーで島に渡り、携帯をオフにして、島で聴こえる自然や作品の「音」だ

けに感覚を研ぎ澄ませる。「MIND TRAIL 奥大和 心のなかの美術館」は世界遺産を含む奈良県の広大なエリアを徒歩で巡る芸術祭。主役は、雄大な自然そのものだ。奥大和の自然とアーティストの哲学が共生し、アートが気づきのレンズとして機能することを目指すこの試みは、人との距離を十分にとったウィ

ズコロナ時代ならではのアートイベントでもある。環境について多様な文脈の議論が飛び交う昨今、自然のなかに身を置くことに特化した芸術祭は、普段あまり使わない感覚と思考を通して、環境と人類の関係性がもはや後戻りできない状況にあることを伝えるきっかけとなるだろう。



creations, the aim is to hold an event uniquely suited to this age of “social distancing.” Saito said, “I’d like to create an art festival in which Okuyamato’s natural features and the artists’ philosophies co-exist, and works of art function as a lens for perception.” This is why he feels that nature, which far surpasses human understanding and technology, should have the starring role.

These art festivals, both of which place people in the middle of natural settings, will undoubtedly promote awareness of the fact that the relationship between the environment and human beings has already reached a point of no return. “The worldwide COVID-19 crisis has become an occasion for us to recognize that human beings are animals whose lives depend on the environment,” said Saito. “Because of this virus, we’ve started thinking about things in a philosophical way even as we go on with our daily lives. Art can serve as a medium connecting two phenomena of different dimensions. It can also be a lens through which to see and consider things, or a telescope that enables us to think about a vision for the future.” In both festivals, sensing the power of plant life and evidence of animal life encountered while looking for works of art scattered through an outdoor space undoubtedly takes a great deal of energy in itself; but by the time they have become tired from walking, visitors may also have gained an awareness — through senses and thought processes they rarely use — that nature is an irreplaceable creation, just as a work of art is. Real, first-hand experiences that we throw ourselves into and appreciate to the fullest will surely help us on the way to action for a new era.

Okuyamato Mind Trail:  
Museum in your mind

The majestic natural landscape of Nara Prefecture’s Okuyamato region is the star of this art festival, which aims to provide opportunities to experience the region’s captivating beauty through the five senses. In Yoshino, known as a World Heritage Site, a culture rooted in Japan’s ancient worship of nature has been handed down through time. Tenkawa is a district famed for its beautiful waters. In Soni, a chain of mountains rises above rock formations. A walking course three to five hours long has been planned in each of these three areas of Okuyamato, based on the respective themes “forest” (Yoshino), “water” (Tenkawa) and “land” (Soni). We have deployed artists with strong connections to Nara and the Mind Trail project (which was launched last year) as curators for the three areas, and visitors will have the chance to appreciate and experience works of art while surrounded by nature. This year’s festival will also feature events spanning all three areas and offer opportunities to get to know more of the region’s attractions, for example by staying for multiple days and visiting nearby sights.

Festival period: Oct. 9 to Nov. 28  
Locations: Town of Yoshino and villages of Tenkawa and Soni, Nara Prefecture  
<https://mindtrail.okuyamato.jp>



Jiku #006 Yoshino,” by Seiichi Saito, the fifth station.



Above: “Wildlife,” by Saki Chikaraishi, station No. 17 on the trail. Below: “Minamo,” by Senzo Ueno, the 13th stop. PHOTO : YUTA TOGO

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Shuji Yamamoto collecting sap while conducting observations of maple forests in Towada.  
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“Seeds on Mr. Iwasaki's Palm,” Yuna Yagi, 2017. Iwasaki preserves native and domesticated seed lines.  
©YUNA YAGI

Feature ART

# ENVIRONMENTAL ART

## Contemporary works show visions of environmental future

By CHIE SUMIYOSHI



“Bio Sculpture,” 2021. Keio SFC Hiroya Tanaka Lab + Metacity (Ryuta AOKI)

PHOTO: SEITARO IKEDA / COURTESY: ART FOR SDGs: KITAKYUSHU ART FESTIVAL IMAGINING OUR FUTURE

In recent years, the contemporary art scene has become increasingly market-oriented, and some artists now even deliberately make works with art fairs or auctions in mind. And yet, at the same time, others have set themselves apart from the commercialism of the art “bubble” and pursue their lifework or some kind of artistic social experimentation with an eye to the future well-being of humankind. Here we introduce three artists and artist groups who are putting technology and fieldwork to use to confront the pressing environmental issues of the day.

This spring, the “Art for SDGs: Kitakyushu Art Festival,” directed by former Mori Art Museum Director Fumio Nanjo, was held under the theme of sustainability. One of the more prominent works on show was “Bio Sculpture,” by the Keio

University Shonan Fujisawa Campus’ Hiroya Tanaka Laboratory in collaboration with Metacity (Ryuta Aoki). The work is a device for re-creating forest soil components using a 3D printer and natural materials such as akadama (red ball) soil and rice husks, and then transplanting those to urban or barren locations. The soil is eventually activated by seeds and microorganisms, and the group tries to visualize its potential in these new environments.

Metacity is a research team that explores the form of a “possible city” through thought experiments and prototyping. At this summer’s “Jack into the Noosphere” exhibition curated by Metacity representative Ryuta Aoki and held at a Japanese garden in the Chiba Prefecture city of Makuhari, artists, researchers, science fiction writers and architects pro-

duced works confronting nature, technology, society and the environment that surrounds us. Their efforts to examine a civilization that has reached a crossroads and explore possibilities for a new paradigm encompassed urgency and earnestness, and were brilliantly stimulating.

Photographer Yuna Yagi focuses on the activities of Masatoshi Iwasaki, who for more than 30 years has been engaged in organic farming and seed production in the Nagasaki Prefecture city of Unzen with the aim of preserving the seed lines of native and domesticated species of vegetables. Through her work, Yagi tries to shine some light on the problem of seed diversity, which is becoming more acute due to climate change and commercialization. At “Kyotographie International Photography Festival 2021,” which is now on, this work is exhibited at Ryosokuin in the

Kenninji temple, which is normally closed to the public.

Shuji Yamamoto has been doing fieldwork in various places such as the Aomori Prefecture city of Towada, making the most of his insights as a skilled gardener. His many nature-related activities, including forest ecology for the sustainability of forests, sake brewing from the point of cultivating the rice, and making maple syrup while conducting observations of the renewal of painted maples, are all “efforts to experience and see the relationship between nature and humans at different angles and distances,” he commented.

The eye-opening perspectives found in these artists’ works might just serve to awaken people’s consciousness and encourage them to work toward a sustainable society. Sometimes art can provide a clear vision for an unclear future.

### ● Summary

「目からウロコ」の発想で環境に向き合う作家たち。

現代美術の市場偏重主義が進み、マーケットを意識した作品制作に走る作家が現れる一方、独自のライフワークの探求や人類の未来を見据えた社会実験に取り組むアーティストもいる。METACITY（青木竜太）は、森から採取した土壌成分を3Dプリンターで再生し、森に宿る生態系を可視化する社会彫刻で

注目されるリサーチチーム。袋小路に陥った文明社会を検証し、新たな変革の可能性を探る活動には、緊急性を帯びた切実な思いがある。写真家・八木夕葉は長崎県雲仙市で在来種・固定種の野菜の種を守る有機農家に着目。気候変動や市場原理に翻弄される種子の問題に一石を投じる。山本修路は熟練の庭師の見

識を生かし、林業の持続可能化への森林生態学的考察など、自然と人間の関わりを角度や距離を変えて観測し続ける。テクノロジーやフィールドワークを生かし環境問題に向き合う彼らの自発的な活動には、未来への明快なビジョンと、持続可能な社会への実践を喚起する「目ウロコ」の視点があった。





Jenifer Rogers, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ), is a familiar face among the upper echelons of Japan's corporate community. In 2015, she became the first foreign female director of a Japanese trading company when she was elected as external director of Mitsui & Co. and has since served as a non-executive director at Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Nissan.

When she is not running board meetings at the ACCJ or attending board meetings at some of Japan's largest corporations, Rogers serves as general counsel Asia at Asurion, a global tech services company.

Commenting on how she balances the responsibilities of her numerous positions, Rogers noted her ability to compartmentalize. "Because I have so many interests and everything sounds so fascinating, I have a hard time saying no," she told The Japan Times, speaking from the ACCJ office in Tokyo's Azabudai district. "I love everything I'm doing, so one of my biggest challenges is just to compartmentalize and focus on one thing at a time. I'm learning to embrace that, and I'm having a good time."

Rogers' recent activities in Japan started in 2014, when she relocated from Hong Kong to Tokyo in her current position at Asurion. However, her relationship with Japan spans decades. In the 1980s, her father was president of Dow Chemical Japan, and it was this familial connection that led her to Japan for the first time in 1981.

Back then, Tokyo was not the international city it is today. Rogers noted how difficult it was to get around as a non-Japanese speaker. There were no bilingual signs, and if she got lost, her only option was to ask for directions at the nearest *koban* (neighborhood police station). "It was a very different city," she said. "I still saw women in kimonos and there was still a lot more of 'traditional Japan.' Don't get me wrong, Tokyo was modernizing — you still had the subways — but it was still a Japanese city."

Rogers' initial stay in Japan shaped her interest in international relations. She had planned to go to nursing school after returning to the U.S., but her experiences studying at Sophia University, where she interacted with people of various nationalities and engaged with global issues, inspired her to shift her focus: "I started to think about how to make a difference in the world through cross-cultural understanding in the international arena."

Propelled by her new passion, Rogers

returned to the U.S. to enter Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, where she developed a foundation in economics and foreign policy. After graduating, she decided to enter the Georgetown Law Center. "When you think about what you can change and how you can engage internationally, and look at the institutions, you realize everything relates to law," she said. "Law school was a way for me to combine my interests and prepare for a career abroad."

Rogers has since led a prolific international career. For 18 years she worked at Bank of America Merrill Lynch (now BofA Securities), where she served in a variety of senior legal roles in New York, Dublin, Hong Kong, London, Tokyo and Mumbai. She also worked as a legal consultant for the World Bank, while obtaining her master's degree in international public policy during a self-described "sabbatical."

Considering her expertise and fluent Japanese abilities, it is no surprise that Japan's business community looks to Rogers for her perspective on various topics, including risk management and corporate governance. It is also noteworthy that she is one of only a few foreign female directors in Japan. Japan ranked 120th among 156 countries in gender equality in 2021, a disparity reflected in the mere 8% of board seats occupied by women at listed companies in Japan. For comparison, as of 2021, women occupied 45% of board seats at listed companies in France and 26% in the U.S.

Despite Japan's comparatively slow progress toward gender equality, Rogers is optimistic about the future. "I think you're seeing an acceleration in the appreciation of diversity and inclusion," she said, noting that when she arrived in 2014, only about 2% of board seats were occupied by women, a quarter of the level now. Japan's aging demographics, compounded by the effects of COVID-19, which have dispelled stigmas toward remote work, have also contributed to this acceleration, she said.

"Diversity is discomfort," Rogers said. "Japan is a harmony-based society that emphasizes compromise, but you're going to have debates when talking to people with different backgrounds. Turning that concept of constructive dissonance into something positive that can encourage us to reach consensus in a more dynamic way is something that excites me."

As president of the ACCJ, Rogers taps into this excitement toward dynamic consensus-building when advocating for the chamber's interests, which are centered on four areas: U.S.-Japan partnership, digital transformation, health care & retirement and sustainability. With regard to sustainability, the chamber has offered recommendations to the Japanese government on how to reach its target of carbon neutrality by 2050 and is working with its members to ensure responsible supply chains and ESG (environmental, social and governance) disclosure.

"We have a lot in the pipeline, and I think sustainability is going to be one of our most exciting areas," she said. "We have so many ways we can contribute, and we're focused on harnessing the energy of our diverse members."

President aims to turn social dissonance into dynamic diversity in Japan

# Rogers taps ACCJ's energy for a sustainable future

By JOE MUNTAL CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PHOTO: SHINSUKE KAMIOKA



"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing." This quote from Helen Keller is one Jenifer Rogers has taken to heart.

## President, general counsel, director

Jenifer Rogers is president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) and general counsel Asia at Asurion. Fluent in Japanese, Rogers first came to Japan with her parents in 1981, when her father was appointed president of Dow Chemical Japan. This encounter with Japan sparked a lifelong interest in international relations and cross-cultural understanding. In addition to her duties at the ACCJ and Asurion, Rogers serves as an external director at Mitsui & Co., Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Nissan Motor Co. Before joining Asurion, she worked in senior legal roles at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in various cities across the world and worked as a legal consultant for the World Bank. She is a commission member and treasurer of the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission (Fulbright Japan), governor of the board of the Georgetown University Alumni Association, member of the board of the U.S.-Japan Council (Japan), founding member of the Asia Society Japan Center and a member of its Arts Committee, as well as a member of the Board of Councilors of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University.

### Jenifer Rogers

President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ)

URL: [www.accj.or.jp](http://www.accj.or.jp)

General Counsel Asia at Asurion

URL: [www.asurion.com](http://www.asurion.com)

Hometown: Midland, Michigan

Years in Japan: 16

### Summary

違いがあるからこそ可能な、力強い合意形成で企業を、社会を動かす

米国企業のアジア担当総合弁護士を務めながら、ACCJ (在日米国商工会議所) の会頭として多忙な日々を送るジュニファー・ロジャーズ氏が、父親の仕事で初めて来日したのは1981年。まだ発展と国際化の過程にあった日本に外国人として滞在し、国際色豊かな上智大学で様々な国際問題を学んだ経験が、その後のキャリアを形作った。米国に帰国後も経済学、外交、法学を学び、世界の経済界へと羽ばたいたロジャーズ氏は、2014年に再び拠点を日本に移し、ま

だ上場企業役員における女性の割合が低い日本において、3社の有名企業の社外取締役を歴任。日本のように調和を大切にする社会においては「Diversity is discomfort (多様性とは不快なものだ)」としながらも、多様性を達成していく中で意見を戦わせながら合意形成していくことに醍醐味を感じている。ACCJとしては、2050年カーボンニュートラルの実現に向けて日本政府への提言を行うなど、持続可能性を中心に据え、活動の幅を広げている。

the japan times

Sustainable Japan Award

2021

## Ceremony and panel session with award winners

Livestreaming Tuesday, Sept. 28, 13:30 - 16:30 (JST)

### Award winners

We are pleased to announce the winners of the third annual Sustainable Japan Award.

Sustainable Japan Grand Prize winner	Euglena Co., Ltd.
Sustainable Japan Excellence Award winner	Nishiawakura village (Okayama Pref.)
Sustainable Japan ESG Excellence Award winner	Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co., Ltd. Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd.
Sustainable Japan Satoyama Excellence Award winner	Kazetotuchito Inc. (Shimane Pref.) Tobira Holdings Co., Ltd. (Nagano Pref.)
Sustainable Japan ESG Special Award winner	Food Loss Bank Co., Ltd. Green Finance Network Japan
Sustainable Japan Satoyama Special Award winner	Meets Takegami (Chuetsu Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd.)

The panel session will be livestreamed online.

For more information: <https://peatix.com/event/2934988>





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The “red thing” played by director and dancer Nao Yoshigai roams the margins between nature and humans.

Feature ART

# MOVIES

## Films with a message: Nature is 'capital' we can't eat into

By CHIE SUMIYOSHI

Films focused on sustainability have, until now, tended to be documentaries showcasing environmental activists. However, prominent among the younger generation of up-and-coming filmmakers are several whose questioning minds have inevitably led them to spotlight the impending threat of climate change and other environmental problems in their creative activities. They produce works confronting the relationship between nature and humankind through highly individual viewpoints and embodied experiences.

One such example is set in the harsh natural environment of Shari, a town on Hokkaido’s Shiretoko Peninsula. Directed by dancer Nao Yoshigai, who also stars in the film, and shot by photographer Naoki Ishikawa, “Shari” depicts a stark reality. Changes wrought on the ecosystem by global warming have caused fish catches to decline, inflicting a heavy blow on the local fishing industry. Too hungry to hibernate, bears come down into the town from the mountains in search of food. In this settlement, whose construction robbed wildlife of their habitats, the boundary of coexistence between humans and animals

has been crossed, in some cases forcing people to kill other creatures to survive. One particular line, spoken by a local, lingers in the ears: “Nature is capital. We should leave the principal untouched and use the interest it generates to feed ourselves.” This sound argument encapsulates the kind of sustainable society we are trying to achieve.

Humans emerged as part of the natural environment with which the Earth has been endowed, living in harmony with other creatures and influencing each other. But we sought to monopolize nature as though it were our property alone, consuming, destroying and discarding, and are only now waking up to the consequences. These young filmmakers are driven by the deep disquiet that their own generation and that of their children might be the ones who suffer the full penalty.

Sometimes immersing themselves bodily in the liminal domain between the natural world and humankind, and at other times exploiting anthropomorphic expressions of nature, they seek to share with the audience their persuasive and compelling experiences.

● Summary  
身体性を通して語りかける次世代の映像作家たち。

未来の社会を担う次世代の映像作家の中で、自身が抱える問題意識と地球環境問題が結びついたテーマのもとで新作を発表した3人の映画監督を紹介する。彼らの特徴は、きわめて個人的な視点と身体性を通じた実体験によって、自然と人間の関係性に対峙する映像作品に取り組んでいることだ。

写真家・石川直樹と共に『Shari』（2021）を監督・出演した吉開菜央は、自然・獣・人間がせめぎ合う知床半島の町を彷徨う。太田光海はアマゾン熱帯雨林の先住民の村に住み込みながら『カナルタ 螺旋状の夢』（2020）を監督・撮影した。沖縄出身の山城知佳子は『リフレーミング』（2021）で米軍基地建設に

より脅かされる土地の風景を擬人化した寓話で紡ぐ。彼らを突き動かすのは自身と、自分の子供たちの世代に、人類の愚行のツケが回ってくるであろうという危機感だ。監督自身が、自然と人間の境界に、身体ごと没入する表現を駆使したグループ感溢れる映像体験を秋公開の新作で共有してほしい。

### “Shari” (2021) Director: Nao Yoshigai

1

This film was spawned when Nao Yoshigai was invited to Shiretoko to participate in “Shashin Zero Banchi Shiretoko” (“Zero Photography Shiretoko”), a project launched by photographer Naoki Ishikawa with local photography enthusiasts to highlight and promote the area’s appeal. With works such as “Grand Bouquet,” which was included in the Directors’ Fortnight program at the Cannes Film Festival, Yoshigai is garnering attention for films in which she pursues physical modes of expression that tap into her skills as a dancer. Dressed as a “red thing” somewhere between human and beast, Yoshigai roams the Shiretoko Peninsula town of Shari, where the balance enabling people, wildlife and nature to coexist is being shifted by the effects of climate change. The film is a collage of documentary and fiction, in which the sights and sounds of nature are interlaced with the director’s own tales. Coming to theaters nationwide from Oct. 23.



©NAO YOSHIGAI

### “Kanarta: Alive in Dreams” (2020) Director: Akimi Ota

2

Visual anthropologist Akimi Ota spent more than a year living in a Shuar village in the Amazon rain forest, following the everyday lives of this indigenous people once feared as headhunters. Sharing a saliva-fermented alcoholic drink, the families venture deep into the forest to obtain almost all they need to live, from food to building materials. They face up to the challenges of existence in the narrow margin between modern society and the forest on which they depend for survival, with their discoveries of medicinal herbs and visions induced by stimulant plants helping them to maintain a steadfast yet flexible outlook on the world. This cinematic experience confronts the viewer with a way of life rooted in coexistence with nature that still survives in the Amazon today despite deforestation and myriad other drastic changes. Will be released nationwide from Oct. 2.

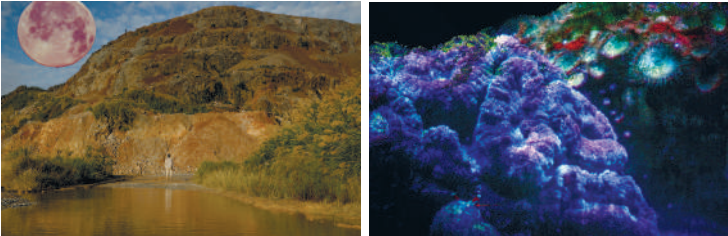


©AKIMI OTA

### “Reframing” (2021) Director: Chikako Yamashiro

3

Okinawan contemporary artist Chikako Yamashiro maintains her track record of presenting works that leverage her perspective as a stakeholder to put Okinawa’s problems under the microscope. Set in Nago’s Awa district, which is renowned for its karst limestone landscape, her latest work is a fable weaving together the mountain and marine environments threatened by the construction of a U.S. military base. The film superimposes on modern scenery the identity of the Okinawan people, who have since ancient times lived in harmony with coral and other flora and fauna. Yamashiro has created a completely novel visual experience, drawing the viewer into the groove through embodiments of herself and others as part of nature, in which the starring role is played by the local landscape anthropomorphized by dancers and actors. Screening until Oct. 10 at Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, as part of the solo exhibition of the same name.



©CHIKAKO YAMASHIRO / COUTESY: YUMIKO CHIBA ASSOCIATES





# NTT Communications tech cuts load on environment

By TOMOKO KAICHI CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The spread of the new coronavirus created an opportunity to accelerate digital transformation and rethink workplaces and work styles. The Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. group, better known as NTT, supports reform of industry, the economy, society and life through information and communications technology. It respects individuals' diverse options and supports efforts to realize a sustainable society where business activity and efforts to reduce environmental load can be achieved at the same time. NTT Executive Officer Hiroki Kuriyama, who concurrently serves as senior executive vice president of the subsidiary NTT Communications Corp., says the "technology and infrastructure (to support our endeavors) have developed to a viable level."

The NTT Communications group was early to introduce telecommuting, with about 80% of its 18,000 employees, including contract workers, currently working either from home or satellite offices. A recent internal survey asking about remote work situations in the past year found that employee satisfaction had improved in nearly all of the aspects the survey's questions covered. These included productivity, freedom of work style and time available for employees to use for themselves. Company expenses decreased, from commuting allowances, business trip compensation and purchase of supplies and office equipment to power bills, proving that remote work also contributes to saving resources and energy, helping protect the environment. In particular, remote work resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of paper the company used. Annual consumption dropped 57% year-on-year, or about 16 million sheets, amounting to some 1,900 trees.

In promoting remote work, Kuriyama's priorities included not just taking measures to optimize the environment and enhance tools for work, including communications infrastructure. Beyond that, he prioritized what he calls a "human mindset transformation." That is, he attached

importance to prompting employees, including contract workers, to change the way they regard remote work while taking each person's situation and sentiments into account. He prioritized the safety of employees, identified types of work that require commuting to the office and those that do not, and adjusted rules on how particular types of work should be conducted. When the boss is the first to shift to remote work, it makes it easier for his staff to do the same.

While people who wish to continue the new work style even after the COVID-19 pandemic ends are expected to increase, NTT has corresponded with the increased costs borne by employees' households as they shifted to remote work. At the same time, the company has embraced the goal of realizing an energy-saving, decarbonized society and focused on the area of energy in addition to its core business of telecommunication and information systems.

In May 2020, NTT formulated an "Environment and Energy Vision" to promote management that strongly minds environmental, social and governance factors. It is one of the pillars of its medium-term management strategy, dubbed "Your Value Partner 2025." Under the vision, which aims to completely eliminate environmental load, NTT pledged to promote renewable energy by, for example, increasing the proportion of renewable energy use by the NTT as a whole by 30% or more by fiscal 2031 and developing innovative environment and energy technologies. The company plans to launch a renewable energy business and support a "total optimization-oriented energy supply that is consumed where it is produced, low-cost and convenient, to the maximum degree possible," according to Kuriyama.

Most recently, NTT announced in June that it had signed a deal with Seven & I Holdings Co. under which it will supply renewable energy to 40 of the latter's 7-Eleven outlets in the Tokyo metropolitan area. According to the company, the project is the first in Japan to use an off-site

power purchase agreement in which power generated at a solar power station set up in Chiba Prefecture by NTT Anode Energy Corp. is supplied through existing power grids.

NTT's key strategy for saving power is the use in information processing of optical technology it developed over many years. While advances in information and communications technology have supported remote work and improved convenience in daily life, they also have brought increased load on data centers and higher power consumption for processing and transmitting data, resulting in large amounts of heat and emissions of carbon dioxide. NTT has dealt with this problem by introducing measures to improve operational efficiency, but the use of optical technology "has the potential (to solve the issue) overnight," Kuriyama said.

"Unlike electrons, photons have a characteristic of generating little heat," Kuriyama said. "If you switch electrons in semiconductor information-processing circuits to photons, heat emissions will decrease to a revolutionary low degree." This also would enable increased semiconductor integration, making it easier to deal with the explosive growth in the amount of information. Not only that, "It will reduce the power consumption of air-conditioners to cool servers, and enable the provision of information processing and data transmission services at a radically low level of energy consumption," Kuriyama said. "Theoretically speaking, optical technology can reduce heat (electricity) consumption to one-hundredth (of the level of electronic technology)."

In 2019, NTT announced an "Innovative Optical and Wireless Network" initiative (IOWN), aiming to use optical technology to reduce the power consumption of computers and communications networks. In January 2020, NTT, along with Sony Group Corp. and Intel Corp., formed the IOWN Global Forum, which promotes the development of next-generation communications infrastructure. NTT also works with Intel, Microsoft Corp., Fujitsu Ltd. and

NEC Corp. on the development of next-generation 6G high-speed mobile technology, which is expected to become commercially available in the 2030s.

It also is in partnership with Mitsubishi Corp. on a project to promote industrial digital transformation. This project aims to optimize the value chain mainly in the area of food logistics and minimize food loss and plastic waste. NTT additionally is in a tie-up with Toyota Motor Corp. on an initiative to realize a smart city that takes advantage of robots and artificial intelligence. The ultra-high-speed, ultra-low-latency 5G mobile technology expands the potential of self-driving vehicles, and 6G will further take self-driving to reality through its real-time performance. In other areas, the fruits of research over many years are beginning to take shape.

"Technology, our wishes and expectations for the 'smartification' of society have now synchronized, and we have entered the phase of realization," Kuriyama said.

Hiroki Kuriyama, senior executive vice president, representative director and executive officer of NTT Communications, served in key posts at NTT.



PHOTO: HIROMICHI MATONO

## Summary

事業と環境負荷低減を両立、グローバルに新技術を推進。

新型コロナウイルス禍でNTTコミュニケーションズグループはリモートワークに大きく舵を切った。副社長の栗山浩樹氏が重視したのが「ヒューマンマインドセットのトランスフォーメーション（HX）」、個々の事情や感情に配慮したうえで働き方の変化を促すことだった。結果的に社員の満足度は高く、生産性の

改善や省資源、省エネなど環境保全面で歓迎される効果もあったという。

NTTは2020年5月に「環境エネルギービジョン」を策定し、「環境負荷ゼロ」を掲げる。再生可能エネルギー事業にも進出し、低廉で使い勝手の良い全体最適なエネルギー供給を支援する。

省電力化の切り札は光技術の情報処理への応用。理論上、電力消費量を従来の100分の1に減らせるという。次世代の光通信基盤や高速通信規格「6G」の開発、スマートシティ実現などでグローバルに提携する。「技術と我々の希望、社会のスマート化への期待がシンクロして、実現の段階に入ってきた」（栗山氏）。

# New experience in OZU CASTLE TOWN HOTEL

## NIPPONIA

www.ozucastle.com

operated by VMG





After working as a professional dancer in Japan and abroad, Makiko Takashima went to England to explore the relationship between the body and space. She collaborates with people from all over the world, including designers, engineers, scientists, architects and researchers. Based in Tokyo since 2019.

PHOTO: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI

Feature ART

# PLASTIC WASTE

## How to see the world in a grain of microplastic

By ARINA TSUKADA

Recently the problem of plastic waste in the ocean is receiving attention all over the world. According to the Annual Report on the Environment, the Sound Material-Cycle Society and Biodiversity in Japan released by the Ministry of the Environment in 2019, about 8 million tons of plastic waste are discharged into the ocean every year. And it is estimated that in 2050 the weight of

NYK Line is collecting samples of microplastics in the ocean to help create a map of global marine plastic garbage.

COURTESY: NIPPON YUSEN KAISHA



### ● Summary

海洋プラスチックごみをアートで可視化する試み。

all plastic waste in the ocean will exceed that of sea life. Once in the ocean, plastic waste remains there semipermanently, breaking down only into microplastics, with a diameter of 5 millimeters or less, that stay there, raising concerns about their long-term impact on the marine ecosystem. The fact is that little is known about the kinds and volume of microplastics already in the sea, and the long-term effects they will have.

These kinds of environmental issues can seem remote from our everyday lives, but there are visual artists trying to raise awareness through art. Makiko Takashima, who studied “information experience design” at the Royal College of Art in London, is currently working on a project involving plastic waste collected from the sea.

“Since I started diving, I have become more aware of environmental issues,” she said. “When you dive, you realize how much plastic trash is scattered near the

bottom of the sea. Even in the most beautiful of seas, there are serious problems.”

While looking for a way in which she could address the problem as an artist, Takashima met Rie Tai, an environmental conservation consultant, and associate professor Yutaka Kameda of the Chiba Institute of Technology, who conducts research on microplastics. In this way she could get advice and support in producing her works. She learned that Kameda’s research laboratory is collaborating with the shipping company NYK Line to conduct a large-scale oceanographic survey of microplastic distribution around the world. Currently, NYK is collecting microplastic samples using its network of about 750 vessels. Kameda’s research laboratory will investigate the size and concentration of microplastics after collection, and plans to create a map of global marine plastic garbage. With Kameda’s cooperation, Takashima is now creating paintings that highlight “the existence of plastic frag-

ments that are otherwise difficult for people to visualize” by attaching plastic fragments to her canvases and then painting over them.

“We’re told that even from our daily laundry, microplastics that can’t be caught by filters are actually leaching into the sea. It is not yet clear what kind of impact they will have, but by the time we notice a problem it will be too late, so being able to make people be aware of it now, at this early stage, is part of the power of art,” she said. “But I’m still trying to work out the best method of expressing this, so am still experimenting. If in future we can create a distribution map of plastic waste, then I will update the work based on that. Personally, I like to focus on creating works that will appeal directly to the five senses, such as sight and hearing. Even where straight numerical data might not seem real to people, the work will enable the viewer to intuitively and physically grasp the nature of the problem.”



Pieces of plastic waste attached to a canvas

PHOTO: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI

2019年の環境省の発表によれば、毎年約800万トンのプラスチックごみが海に流出するという。海中のプラスチックは半永久的に分解されず、直径5mm以下の「マイクロプラスチック」として海中にとどまる。しかしどんな種類や量のマイクロプラスチックがあり、それがどう影響を及ぼすかはまだ解明されていない。

その問題をアートを媒介として社会に発信する作家が高島マキコさんだ。海から回収したプラごみを使い作品制作を進めている。環境保全コンサルタントである田井梨絵氏や千葉工業大学・亀田豊准教授から、さらに亀田研究室と日本郵船との連携から大規模な海洋調査を行っていることを知った。現在、日本

郵船では約750隻におよぶ自社の運行船ネットワークを活かし航海中にマイクロプラスチックを採取している。そこで高島さんは、その協力のもと、採取されたプラスチック片をキャンバスに貼り付け、上から絵具を重ね塗ることで「可視化されにくいプラスチック破片の存在」を訴える絵画作品を制作している。





This article was published on Aug. 9 in The Japan Times



BRAND HISTORY & ARCHIVE

# Ads are a mirror reflecting Japan's history and evolution

By TOSHIYUKI KITAHARA CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the 1980s, the cultural context of ads was often discussed. It was a time when ads were frequently the starting point for fashion trends. The phrase “Ads are a mirror reflecting the current era” was in frequent use. But this only scratches the surface of the complex phenomenon of fashion. Ads also changed as Japan’s industrial structure and consumer behavior evolved. For example, ads for cars and home electronics, which ran frequently during the period of high economic growth, have decreased as those related to mobile phones and internet services have increased. These have become the ads we see daily. Japanese electronics makers, which used to produce a full range of home products, have shifted to specializing in products and services that best take advantage of their respective strengths. Automakers now focus more on overseas markets than the domestic market. The greater use of information and communications technology has driven a significant growth of that industry, and this is reflected in advertising.

Historically, The Japan Times played a news agency-like role, providing information in English to embassies and consulates in Japan. It is not difficult to imagine that expectations were placed on it to showcase the appeal of Japanese companies and products and help report on conditions in Japanese society. Japan opened its doors to the rest of the world following the Meiji Restoration. In an effort to boost Japan’s position in the global community, the government worked to help industry and the military under the slogan “*fukoku kyōhei*” (enrich the nation, strengthen the military). Standards of living improved. After the nation experienced defeat in World War II, there was a phase of recovery from the devastation, followed by a period of high economic growth. Japan eventually achieved the world’s second-largest gross domestic product. Ads carried in The Japan Times reflect all this history, and are witness to it.



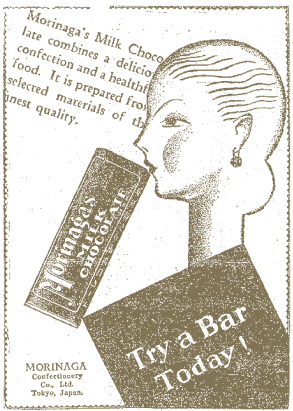
1905



1924



1924



1930



1958

## Meiji

Silk and pearls, then beer and soap

The Japan Times was launched in 1897 during the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Not unsurprisingly, it carried ads for silk and pearl products, and others from emerging industries began to be seen. Beer, said to have been a favorite beverage of the politician Enomoto Takeaki, had begun to be imported in the final part of the feudal era, but domestic production grew to exceed imports by 1887. By that time, companies with modern brewing technology, including Nippon Beer, Sapporo Beer Brewery and Osaka Beer, had been established. One can see from ads in this period that Japanese were increasingly taking up the habit of drinking beer, and domestic production began

## 1897-1912

in earnest. Domestic efforts to develop soap of a quality rivaling imported products started around 1890, when entrepreneurs Nagase Tomiro and Kobayashi Tomijiro launched domestic production. Soap was still a luxury item, but its use began to grow among ordinary citizens by the end of the Meiji Era, contributing greatly to public health. A prominent characteristic of the ads in this era is the emergence of those placed by individual business owners. Beer and soap makers, the early adopters of newspaper ads, have been developing their advertising methods ever since, and today engage in wide-ranging advertising activities.

## Taisho

Toothpaste, little luxuries and cars

Sandwiched between the Meiji and Showa eras, each of which saw major social changes, the Taisho Era (1913-1926) may at first appear to lack special character. As the commotion of Meiji subsided, society turned inward — yet the germs of wide-ranging changes began to emerge. Ads for department stores and specialty shops reflected how people’s lives had improved, able to spend on little luxuries rather than just scraping by. Ads also reflected how the wealthy and educated — the main segment of The Japan Times’ readership at the time — were increasingly taking up a modern lifestyle. Automobile ads began to appear. Toothpaste in tubes began to be sold

## 1913-1926

toward the end of Meiji, along with soap, and won increasing popularity. The emergence of toothpaste ads was an important milestone in the history of advertisement in Japan because they led businesses to realize the importance of catchy copy and attractive artwork. Ads from those days still impress even modern eyes. The predecessor to Calpis Co., maker of the popular soft drink Calpis, was founded in the Taisho Era as a health product. The company was quick to recognize the importance of advertisement. Today Calpis is drunk around the world, and its original slogan, “the taste of first love,” still pops up in conversation in Japan.

## Showa I

Prewar Showa: Cars and cultured pearls

The prewar part of the Showa Era, starting in 1926, saw Japan become a global power rivaling the United States and major countries in Europe. Ads for automobiles and motorbikes increased, though most were still for foreign products. Only a handful of people could afford them initially, but ownership grew along with the number of the wealthy. The first symphony orchestra was established, and Japan proved to the world that its culture

## 1927-1945

was no less sophisticated than those of its Western counterparts. Japanese pearls made a major leap in quality thanks to domestically developed culturing technology and came to be recognized as the world’s best. They had a devastating impact on the market for natural pearls. Japanese cultured pearls, which received an additional boost when Coco Chanel adopted the pearl necklace as a key fashion item, would come to dominate the global market.

## Showa II

Postwar Showa: Cars and radios go global

In the postwar Showa Era, from 1946 to about 1970, Japan rebuilt from the ravages of war and achieved miraculous economic growth, flooding global markets with its products. Applying technology originally developed for military equipment, Japan’s automakers grew significantly, eventually taking large shares in the global market. Advertising, once dominated by foreign vehicles, now prominently featured domestic models. Though the transistor radio was invented abroad, household electronic

products from Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo K.K., which would become today’s Sony Group Corp., won worldwide recognition for their high quality. Its ads featured technology that was the pride of the nation and demonstrated a high degree of advertising skill. Cosmetics began to be marketed to women in the rest of the world. Japanese companies’ strategy of establishing a brand image through many high-quality ads was imitated by foreign rivals. Ad concepts developed in this period are still in use today.

### ● Summary

広告は時代を映す鏡である

1980年代は広告が文化的な文脈で語られ、広告から流行が起きていた時代でもあった。「広告は時代を移す鏡である」は、このころによく使われた言葉である。しかしこの言葉は流行という表面的な事象だけを表しているのではなく、広告は日本の産業構造の変遷や消費者の消費行動の変化と密接に関係して変化していることも語っている。例えば高度成長期には多く出稿されていた自動車や家電製品の広告は今では影を潜め、代わりに携帯電話やインターネット

ト関連の広告が増えている。電気産業では製品をフルラインナップで出すのではなく、製品・サービスの強みに特化する変遷があり、自動車産業では国内市場よりも海外市場での成長が重視されている。社会のICT化の進展により、情報通信産業の発展は著しい。その結果が広告に反映されているのだ。この間のThe Japan Timesにおける広告の変遷は、その歴史の一端を忠実に物語っており、これらの広告は歴史の証人でもある。

Senior consulting director,  
Dentsu Media Lab



Toshiyuki Kitahara graduated from the Tokyo Institute of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in electrical and electronic engineering, and received a master’s degree in physical information engineering from the same university. He joined Dentsu Inc. in 1985,

working in the Information Systems Division and the Corporate Planning Division before joining the Research and Development Division.

He has been engaged in research on mass media and communications, consulting for media companies and on organizational and human resource systems, and research on advertising and related market and industry trends.

He is the co-author of “Information Innovators: Leaders of a Co-Creative Society” (1999, Kodansha) and many other publications. He has been a part-time lecturer to graduate students at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, a concurrent lecturer to graduate students at Hosei University and Rikkyo University, an expert member of study groups at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and an expert member of the Intellectual Property Research Institute.

PHOTO: HIROMICHI MATONO



# UPDATE YOUR WEEKEND

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