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Invitation:
Art festivals for fun and future

FROM THE EDITOR

By YOSHIKUNI SHIRAI / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This month we explore the many art festivals planned for regional cities throughout Japan in the second half of the year.

This is a bumper year for art festivals, with many internationally acclaimed events — some only held every three years — concentrated over the next six months, including Setouchi Triennale 2022 (Kagawa and Okayama prefectures), Echigo-

Tsumari Art Triennale (Niigata Prefecture), Aichi Triennale 2022 (Aichi Prefecture), Okayama Art Summit 2022 (Okayama Prefecture) and many more.

One of the expectations of art festivals held in regional settings is that injections of art will help revitalize the economies and cultural lives of the areas.

As their populations decline and

grow older, residents of regional cities have their hopes pinned on organic economic growth, local cultural traditions being passed on to younger generations, local industries being revitalized and more.

How will this year's crop of festivals deploy art and culture to address these difficult issues? Let's take a look at what is planned.

今回は、今年下半期（6月～12月）に日本の地方都市で行われる芸術祭にスポットを当てた特集です。

実は、今年2022年は注目の芸術祭の当たり年なのです。〈瀬戸国際芸術祭〉（香川県・岡山県）、〈越後妻有大地の芸術祭〉（新潟県）〈国際芸術祭「あいち2022」〉（愛知県）、〈岡山芸術交流〉（岡山県）という、国際的にも評価されている芸術祭、それも3年に一度しか開催されない芸術祭が、今年下半期に集中して行われるのです。

地方の都市や地域で開催される芸術祭で期待されていることのひとつに、アートを切り口とした地域経済・地域文化の活性化があります。

人口減少や高齢化が進むなか、地方都市での「無理のない経済成長」や「地域に根差した文化の継承」「地場産業の活性化」など。今年行われる芸術祭で、地域創成への取り組みが、どのようになされるのか？ 芸術祭やアートの可能性を探ってみたいと思います。



TAKEO OBAYASHI

Born in Tokyo in 1954, Takeo Obayashi is chairperson and representative director of Obayashi Corp. and chairperson of Obayashi Foundation. Also known as a collector of contemporary art, he is a member of the board of the Mori Art Museum and a trustee of the Hara Museum. Additionally, he serves on the international councils of renowned museums outside Japan, including the Tate and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 2020, Obayashi became chairperson of the Aichi Triennale's organizing committee.



“Archive for Human Activities” (AHA!) — A scene from a “traveling screening” held at the home of an 8-mm film contributor.

Feature ART

KEY PERSON

Art festivals foster cycles of culture and industry

By ARINA TSUKADA

One of the featured artists is Theaster Gates, an American artist known for his work focusing on Black history, social inclusion, regionalism and land development. Gates' installation “A Clay Sermon” at Whitechapel Gallery (2021-2022, London)

© THEASTER GATES / IMAGE COURTESY OF WHITECHAPEL GALLERY



● Summary

芸術祭に必要なのは
継続性とオリジナリティ

日本全国で毎年新たな芸術祭が開催されている。愛知県の都市部を舞台に展開する「国際芸術祭あいち2022（以下、あいち2022）」の組織委員会会長を務める大林剛郎に話を聞いた。「あいち2022が目指すのは、イタリアのヴェネチア・ビエンナーレやドイツで開催されるドクメンタのように世界中から人を集め、国際的なメッセージ

を発信していく芸術祭です」。

愛知県は伝統工芸や食文化など豊富な文化資源を有している。そうした文化資源を生かす新たな活路を見出すのも芸術祭の役割だと大林は語る。

「各地で行われる芸術祭の意義は、第二次大戦後に均質化してしまっただけでなく、文化の街であるというイメージを発信し続けることが重要です。芸術祭に最も求められるのは、その継続性にあると思います。さらに国際的な評価が高まれば、文化と産業のより良いサイクルが自然と生まれていくことでしょう」。

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COVER PHOTO



The island of Naoshima, Kagawa Prefecture, is one of the venues for the Setouchi Triennale 2022. Near the port is a pavilion designed by architect Sou Fujimoto. The structure, which visitors can walk inside, is made up of 250 triangles in stainless steel mesh.

NAOSHIMA PAVILION OWNER: NAOSHIMA TOWN
 ARCHITECT: SOU FUJIMOTO ARCHITECTS
 PHOTO: BEN RICHARDS

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The Obayashi Corp. office is home to various contemporary artworks selected by Takeo Obayashi. This is a work by Daniel Buren, “From Floor to Ceiling and Vice Versa”

PHOTO: KOUTAROU WASHIZAKI

From urban international festivals to tourism-style festivals spread across regions rich in nature, new art festivals are emerging in Japan each year. One of the largest, and the focus of much attention, is the Aichi Triennale 2022, an international art festival that will be held in Aichi Prefecture starting in summer. We spoke with Takeo Obayashi, chairperson of the Aichi Triennale Organizing Committee, about the possibility of achieving community revitalization — measured economic development and the continuity of culture — through an art-based approach.

“I think the significance of art festivals held in various locations lies in the recovery of region-specific cultures, which became homogenized in the postwar period,” he said. “Each region has its own history, and once had its own unique landscape and culture. During Japan’s rapid economic growth period, however, near-identical business and housing facilities sprang up everywhere, and regional distinctiveness was lost.

“To hold an art festival, on the other hand, you have to bring out the special characteristics that set an area apart from others. Along with incorporating regional history and culture, it’s also essential to introduce elements that are new to local people too. Tourists’ interests and tastes are becoming more diverse as well, and I think another role of art festivals is to offer people new travel options, such as staying in a region and taking time to explore it at their leisure.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a dramatic decrease in tourists, and for two years it was tremendously difficult to invite artists to Japan from overseas. Nevertheless, Aichi 2022 has invited nine curatorial advisers from countries around the world, and over half of the 100 participating artists and groups will be coming from overseas. Why did the organizers take on this challenge despite the continued risk inherent in inviting artists from abroad?

Obayashi said: “The aim of this art festival is to send an international message out to the global art scene. Art festivals like the Venice Biennale in Italy and Documenta in Germany always bring together people from around the world and receive international accolades. It has been over a decade since the launch of the Aichi Triennale (in 2010). ... Going forward, we’d like to reaffirm and strengthen the direction of the festival even more. This year’s theme is ‘Still Alive.’ Inspired by Aichi-born artist On Kawara’s series titled ‘I Am Still Alive,’ it refers to all of us today who’ve been through the COVID-19 pandemic, and incorporates the message that art stays alive even in the midst of this kind of social disarray.”

The special character of Aichi 2022 lies

in its diverse performing arts productions and its learning programs. One of the festival locations, the Aichi Arts Center, houses large venues like the Aichi Prefectural Art Theater, so the program will include an ambitious line-up of radical theater, dance and music performances bringing together artists from Japan and overseas. The learning programs will present numerous events such as lectures and guided tours, including “interactive viewing experiences” conducted by volunteer guides, designed not just for a small number of art enthusiasts, but for a wide variety of people.

“Another aspect of the learning programs is cultivating the next generation. It’s likely that children exposed to art festivals at a young age will have a very different perspective on the area they live in. I think observing areas from the starting point of culture may also lead to the development of local industries,” Obayashi said.

People tend to think of Aichi Prefecture mainly as the home of Toyota Motor Corp. In addition to manufacturing, however, Aichi is rich in cultural resources, including traditional crafts and foods. According to Obayashi, one role of art festivals is to present the history of these local industries and find new opportunities for making effective use of cultural resources.

“As an example, the Arimatsu district in the city of Nagoya — one of the festival locations this year — is famous for Arimatsu Narumi *shibori*, a tie-dyeing technique handed down since the 17th century,” Obayashi said. “Not many people are familiar with the origins and histori-

cal background of these traditional industries, and I think the art festival can be a catalyst for new types of information dissemination. Another festival location, the city of Tokoname, has been known for its ceramics since olden times. When artists get involved in areas with unique traditions, discoveries that could not happen through tourism alone are likely to be propelled by way of art.”

This type of regional promotion is not limited to traditional industries. In a district of Nagoya with a concentration of textile wholesalers, vacant old buildings came to be used as art festival venues, sparking the emergence of art galleries and cafes in the area and the development of a local community through art.

“In many countries there are examples of art festivals giving rise to other types of industry, and a similar phenomenon is occurring in Aichi Prefecture,” Obayashi said. “Having said that, Aichi 2022 is a project carried out through the initiative of Aichi Prefecture, so there are times when it’s viewed with a stern eye in regard to the use of tax revenue. Nonetheless, some say Japan’s overall attitude toward culture would be questioned if the festival stopped now, and there was a determination on the prefecture’s side that the flame of culture should be kept alive — that it’s important to continue spreading awareness of Aichi Prefecture not merely as a center of industry, but as a center of culture as well. I think what’s needed most in an art festival is continuity. And if the festival’s international profile is raised, it’s likely that a more beneficial cycle of culture and industry will naturally come about.”

The Aichi Triennale also focuses on the performing arts, and the Back to Back Theatre, based in Australia, will present a film work. Back to Back Theatre, “Oddlands,” an award-winning 2017 film work.

PHOTO: JEFF BUSBY



From verdant foothills to small islands in the sea, urban museums to disused buildings — in Japan, there is a huge variety of places where you will find major art festivals. It is estimated that more than 100 art festivals are held in Japan each year, large and small, and they usually try to make the most of the unique characteristics of their regions. Many had to be postponed or canceled due to COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, but as a result of those interruptions this year there will be more than ever, many of them having to come up with creative ways to succeed “with COVID.” In this special report we introduce a few of them.

Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, held in the vast countryside of Niigata Prefecture, was a pioneer of regional art festivals in Japan, having started in 2000. The

brainchild of General Director Fram Kitagawa, the event has succeeded in its novel attempt to display artworks by international contemporary artists in rural and natural settings — and it established a model for what you might call “art-led regional revitalization.” The region of Echigo — Tsumari experiences heavy snowfalls in winter and is suffering from a declining and aging population, but it still boasts a robust culture that is deeply enmeshed with nature and agricultural traditions. Visitors to the event can take in beautiful scenery while checking out artworks scattered across a vast area — about 1.2 times larger than the 23 wards of Tokyo. In that way, it is probably the biggest art festival in the world, so most people choose to explore by car or bike. Some works are housed in disused school buildings or vacant homes. One of

the keys to managing the many venues is the dedicated volunteers, who come from near and far and range in age from young students to the elderly. In 2018, the event welcomed around 540,000 visitors, which not only had a direct economic impact, but also resulted in increased employment and a boost in the area’s nonresident population. It is a good example of how even in depopulated regions, art can contribute to the development of new tourism resources and local communities.

Setouchi Triennale 2022, which will be held across 12 islands and two ports in the Seto Inland Sea, is another art festival where you can experience the beauty of nature as well as the lifestyle and culture of remote islands. It has proven extremely popular with both locals and visitors from abroad. Kitagawa is the

general director of this event too. The islands in the Seto Inland Sea are dotted with some of the world’s leading art museums and hotels, which have been built over many years by the Fukutake Foundation with the participation of leading architects like Tadao Ando and Ryue Nishizawa. One private company’s significant cultural investment, combined with an art festival supported by Kagawa Prefecture and other local governments and companies, have produced a synergistic effect, and as a result these small islands, accessible only by boat, are now known around the world. This will be the fifth time the festival is held, and in that short time the island of Megijima, which used to have a population of about 150, has welcomed 60 new permanent residents. Likewise, on the island of Teshima, which historically suffered from illegal dumping of industrial waste, a focus on local production for local consumption has seen new restaurants open that have become popular with tourists.

From the success of these festivals, the number of other art festivals held in natural settings increased dramatically from the 2010s, and continues to grow. That said, there are many art festivals aimed at international cultural exchange that are held in urban settings. The Yokohama Triennale, which started in 2001, hopes to become an international art festival drawing visitors from all over the world, just like the Venice Biennale and Documenta. The Aichi Triennale kicked off in 2010, inheriting the legacy of the 2005 World Exposition in the city. This year, the event welcomes nine curatorial advisors from overseas, further burnishing its international credentials.

In this way, a unique “art festival culture” has blossomed in Japan, though some challenges remain. In the midst of this proliferation, organizers must remain focused on their region-specific originality, and they need to achieve a degree of sustainability in terms of funding and management. The key is no doubt creating a virtuous economic cycle and population growth, which will stimulate economic activity not only while the events themselves are being held, but during the times when they are not.

With so many art festivals going on this summer in Japan’s regions, now is the perfect chance to learn not just about art, but about how it might contribute to establishing sustainable local communities.



Kaoru Minamino’s “Untitled 1602,” installed in Hikone Castle’s Genkyu-en Garden for the Biwako Biennale 2020

© BIWAKO BIENNALE

Feature ART

SCHEDULE

Art festivals bring out the appeal of regions

By ARINA TSUKADA

Left: An exhibit for Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2022. “The Monument of Tolerance,” a tower symbolizing peace and symbiosis, is by former Soviet Union-born Ilya and Emilia Kabakov.

PHOTO: NAKAMURA OSAMU

Center: This year marks the third edition of the Reborn-Art Festival. Kohei Nawa’s “White Deer (Oshika)” was installed for the first edition and is now on permanent display.

© REBORN-ART FESTIVAL

Right: “Shima Kitchen” was created by architect Ryo Abe from a converted house for Setouchi Triennale 2010. It now offers food made from local produce and puts on a range of special events.

PHOTO: NAKAMURA OSAMU



2022 art festivals in Japan

YAMAGATA

Yamagata Biennale 2022
Sept. 3 – 25

https://www.tuad.ac.jp/yb2022_outline/

An art festival organized by the Tohoku University of Art and Design, this year's fifth installment is aimed at creating a "place where hearts can connect" through art and design against the backdrop of the division, separation and isolation that exist in contemporary society. The event is unique in that it brings together a large number of cross-disciplinary projects covering art, food, health and the environment. Exhibits will consider new potential for regional areas from folkloric and artistic perspectives that are informed by the host's findings as a research and educational institution.

This art festival is held in a traditional building in the old town of Omihachiman. With the aim of saving historical buildings that retain remnants of unique local culture, such as houses from the Edo (1603–1868) and Meiji (1868–1912) eras and old sake and soy sauce breweries, this event attempts to use art to find new ways to preserve disappearing traditions for the future. The concept of the event is to "restore the aesthetic sense of the Japanese," and it seeks to promote exchanges between locals and the foreign artists who are invited to participate.

MIYAGI

Reborn-Art Festival 2021–22
Aug. 20 – Oct. 2

<https://www.reborn-art-fes.jp/>

A festival that fuses art, music and food in the city of Ishinomaki and town of Onagawa, both of which were greatly impacted by the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. More than 10 years later, this year's event has the theme "Altruism and Fluidity" and considers art as a means for posing questions about our uncertain times, characterized by COVID-19 and war. In addition, given the region's flourishing fishing and agriculture industries, food projects by Ishinomaki chefs will be held on the theme of sustainability.

NIIGATA

Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2022
Apr. 29 – Nov. 13

<https://www.echigo-tsumari.jp/en/>

An international art festival set in the Echigo-Tsumari region, an area that receives some of Japan's heaviest snowfalls and where the population is declining and aging. Held over a seven-month period, the event features approximately 200 works that are dotted throughout a magnificent natural setting for visitors to discover and enjoy. Even outside the official dates, events are held involving eating or even staying at old converted elementary schools. The event organizers hope that through art they can uncover the value inherent in the region and build a path to regional revitalization.

SHIGA

Biwako Biennale 2022
Oct. 8 – Nov. 27

<https://energyfield.org/biwakobiennale/>

AICHI

Aichi Triennale 2022
July 30 – Oct. 10

<https://aichitriennale.jp/>

Held outdoors throughout Aichi Prefecture, this is one of Japan's largest international art festivals, presenting cutting-edge art that crosses genres of contemporary and performing arts and also includes learning programs. The exhibits of contemporary and performing arts tend to center around Nagoya, including its Arimatsu district, which boasts many historical buildings, but others can be found in Ichinomiya, a city with a tradition of cotton textiles that is still active in wool production, and Tokoname, a city famous for pottery. Many of those projects seek to connect local traditional cultures with the present.



KAGAWA, OKAYAMA

Setouchi Triennale 2022
Aug. 5 – Sep. 4 / Sep. 29 – Nov. 6

<https://setouchi-artfest.jp/>

An art festival held on islands in the Seto Inland Sea, where the vitality of island life has been in decline due to cultural homogenization plus population decline and aging, along with the larger trends of globalization and economic rationalism that the world has seen in modern times. The festival's mission is "restoration of the sea." In addition to enjoying site-specific art and architecture designed to make the most of the picturesque scenery, visitors can also learn about the unique folklore, cultures and lifestyles of local people who live surrounded by the sea.

YAMAGUCHI

Ube Biennale
Oct. 2 – Nov. 27

<https://ubebiennale.com/>

An art festival with 60 years of history. The event has its roots in Japan's first large-scale outdoor sculpture exhibition, the "1st Ube City Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition," which was held as part of a citizens' movement to "decorate the town with sculpture" that started in the city of Ube in 1961. By gradually adding to the number of outdoor sculptures in the city through the biennale, the organizers hope to nurture a rich future for the region. In addition to soliciting artworks for exhibition from the public, an artist-in-residence program is held, as are other experimental programs for artist support and to increase citizen engagement with art.

FUKUOKA

Miyawaka International Triennale "TRiART"
July 30 – May 31, 2024

<https://www.trial-net.co.jp/TRiART/>

Set in the city of Miyawaka, where a public-private project promoting remote work, "Musubu Miyawaka," is being held, this event uses art to explore the relationships between vision, people, place and culture in an era when work styles and lifestyles are undergoing major changes. Three disused school buildings will be converted into commercial and research facilities, and works created by local students and five invited artists and artist groups will be exhibited.

OKAYAMA

Okayama Art Summit 2022
Sep. 30 – Nov. 27

<https://www.okayamaartsummit.jp/>

An international contemporary art exhibition held every three years in the city of Okayama, the event this year welcomes Argentine-born artist Rirkrit Tiravanija as artistic director and 24 groups of artists from 12 countries. The aim is to invite overseas artistic directors and the world's best artists to discover the existing cultural riches that lie dormant in Okayama.

● Summary

地域活性と結びつき
独自に進化する日本の芸術祭

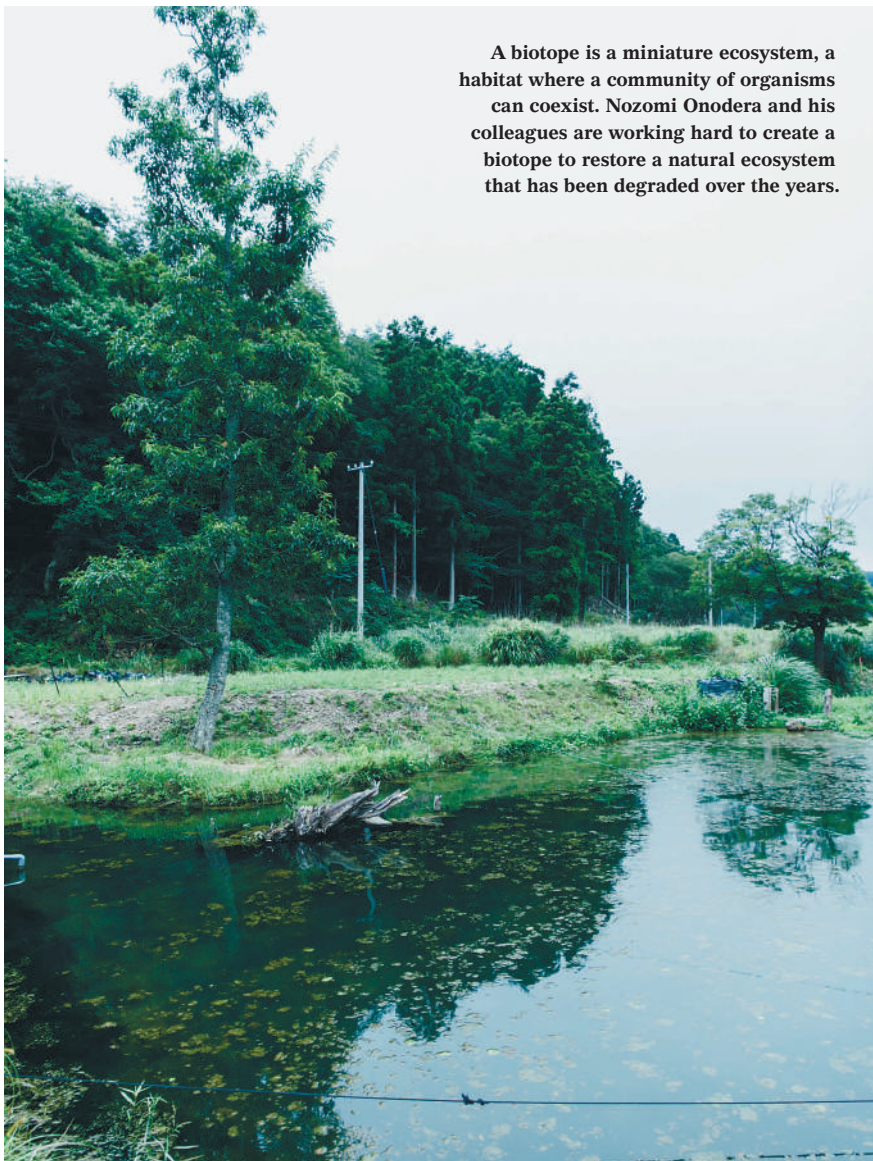
自然あふれる土地から都市部に至るまで、日本ではすべてが芸術祭の舞台となる。現在は大小含め100件以上の芸術祭があると言われるが、今年は大型の芸術祭が重なる当たり年。今回はその一部を紹介する。
新潟県の広大な里山を舞台とする「越後妻有 大地の芸術祭2022」は、自然あふれる土地に世界各国のアーティ

ストたちの作品を展示するという異例の試みを成功させ、アートによる地域活性のロールモデルを築いた。瀬戸内海の島々で開催される「瀬戸内国際芸術祭2022」も、美しい海と離島の文化に触れられる芸術祭として国内外で爆発的な人気を誇っている。
数々の芸術祭が乱立するなか、各自がいかにサステイ

ナブルな経済循環や人口流入を生み出せるかは今後の課題だ。芸術祭の実施者たちはそうした多くの課題と向き合いながら、アートを軸とした地域活性に取り組んでいる。この夏、日本各地の芸術祭をめぐりながら、サステイナビリティへの新たなヒントを学ぶ旅へ出てみるのはいかがだろうか？



日本語全文はこちらから



A biotope is a miniature ecosystem, a habitat where a community of organisms can coexist. Nozomi Onodera and his colleagues are working hard to create a biotope to restore a natural ecosystem that has been degraded over the years.



PHOTOS: REBORN-ART FESTIVAL

Feature ART

OSHIKA

Biotope born from quake relief aims to educate

By MIREI TAKAHASHI

The Earth is a collection of ecosystems connected by cause and effect.” So explained Nozomi Onodera, a professional hunter who operates the Fermento facility for processing venison on the Oshika Penin-

sula in the Miyagi Prefecture city of Ishinomaki. The facility, which handles deer culled locally as part of efforts for population control, originated out of the Reborn-Art Festival (RAF) that was held in 2017 to support reconstruction in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.

After a successful career as a chef in Tokyo, Onodera had returned to his hometown in Miyagi and taken up hunting. “There is a lot of nature here, like the mountains, sea and rivers, and delicious foods in each season. I decided that to really deliver the best cuisine to your loved ones, you need to start by collecting the ingredients yourself,” he explained.

The earthquake was a turning point for Onodera. Immediately after it struck, a nonprofit organization began bringing chefs from all over Japan to the area to cook meals for survivors, and Onodera provided his venison free of charge.

Through these activities, he became acquainted with Takeshi Kobayashi, a music producer who later launched RAF with others in order to support the reconstruction, and Onodera became involved in the project.

At an RAF predecessor event, the “Reborn-Art Festival x ap bank fes 2016,” Onodera teamed up with Hiroataka Meguro to reassemble the chefs who had helped with the initial disaster relief, and kicked off a side event called “Reborn-Art DINING,” where they made meals using local ingredients. Then, when RAF itself kicked off in 2017, the new Fermento facility also opened its doors.

Onodera’s next project started in 2019, involving collaboration with photographer Lieko Shiga to build a biotope (habitat). Although eight years had passed since the earthquake, there were still big barriers to restoring ecosystems that had been damaged for years. Onodera says he was particularly conscious of the

damage caused by a large typhoon that had struck that same year. “Coniferous plantations artificially created for forestry are not able to retain much water, so when there is heavy rain they are prone to landslides,” he said.

Onodera and Shiga built a regulating pond and a biotope to improve the typhoon-damaged environment around Fermento. Shiga had originally been introduced to Onodera in the course of planning for that year’s RAF, but while listening to his story about awareness of nature and the environment, she decided the first thing to do was to start work on the biotope.

Onodera hopes that in the future Fermento and the biotope will become places to educate children about the environment. In this way, a facility born from an art festival will not just preserve the local environment, but help pass on the baton of environmental conservation to the next generation.



Changes in the environment have led to an explosion in the sika deer population and created a significant pest problem. Fermento is a venison processing facility where deer that would normally be discarded can be turned into food.



Deer meat from the Oshika Peninsula can be enjoyed at home in charcuterie sets complete with sausages and hamburgers. <https://antlercrafts.jp/>

● Summary

東北復興フェスティバルから生まれたビオトープ

宮城県石巻市牡鹿半島にて、駆除を余儀なくされるニホンジカを解体し、食肉加工する鹿肉解体処理施設「FERMENTO」を2017年から運営する食猟師の小野寺望。この施設誕生のきっかけが、東北復興を目指す芸術祭、Reborn-Art Festival (以下、RAF) だった。小野寺はシェフとして活動した後、故郷の宮城県で自

ら狩猟を行うようになったが、2011年の東日本大震災で転機が訪れた。震災直後、全国のシェフが被災地で炊き出しをする活動に参加。食肉加工した鹿肉を無償で提供していたところ、後にRAFを立ち上げる音楽プロデューサーの小林武史と知り合い、RAFの企画に携わるようになっていった。

この芸術祭の一環として、小野寺と写真家の志賀理恵子らによる「ビオトープ」のプロジェクトが2019年から始まる。長年かけて破壊されてきた自然生態系を回復させること、そして将来的に子どもたちの環境教育の場となることが目的だ。芸術祭から誕生した施設が、地域の自然を守り次世代へのバトンを渡していく。



日本語全文はこちら

Roundtable



This article was published on April 25
in The Japan Times



Designing from the Earth up: IDEO puts long term first

By JOE MUNTAL CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In 1980, Steve Jobs asked a new design firm to develop a mouse for what would be one of the first personal computers to feature a graphical user interface, the Apple Lisa. The life span of this innovative desktop computer was short, but the legacy of its mouse design, which abandoned an expensive mechanism found in earlier mice in favor of a more easily manufactured component, can be seen in many of the mechanical mice used today.

The design firm behind the innovative mouse was David Kelley Design, the precursor of the innovation and design consulting firm IDEO, which was established in 1991 when designers David Kelley, Bill Moggridge and Mike Nuttall merged their companies. The firm has since expanded well beyond the scope of industrial product design, working on projects that encompass everything from health care to government and education.

Regardless of the field, central to IDEO's design philosophy is the notion of human-centered design, an approach to design that integrates the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success. In the 18th iteration of the Japan Times Sustainability Roundtable, host Ross Rowbury sat down with Amelia Juhl, design director of IDEO Tokyo, to discuss human-centered design and its role in achieving sustainable solutions.

Skin care, kitchens, clean air

Juhl and IDEO have worked with various companies and organizations to innovate services and products in a wide array of fields, ranging from skin care products and agriculture to aerospace and futuris-



Amelia Juhl, a design director
at IDEO Tokyo

PHOTOS: YUICO TAIYA FOR PHOTOMATE

IDEO
tokyo

● Summary

デザインにも地球との協調・長期的健全性を

人を中心に考えられた分野横断的なアプローチで知られるデザイン会社、IDEO Tokyo。同社のデザインディレクターを務めるのがデザイン研究者のアメリカ・ジュール氏だ。IDEOはスキンケア製品、未来的なキッチン家具から農業、行政や教育など様々な分野のプロジェクトを手掛け、組織や企業の製品やサービスの革新を支援してきた。ジュール氏は、現代のデザインに必要なのは全ての過程において責任を持つことであり、デザイナーは「人間の弱さに

乗じてニーズを生み出し、お金を出させることの容易さを知っているからこそ」、自制を働かせ短期的幸福ではなく社会と地球のために長期的な健全性を確保すべきだと話した。地球に良いことは経済構造上の動機とは矛盾しがちで実行は容易ではない。しかし、人間の手に負えないのは経済ではなく自然だと同氏は語り、地球との協調が必要だと述べた。これを顧客とも共有し、持続可能性の原則を会話の中に取り入れるためのより良い方法を模索し続けている。

acknowledging that these projects have value from a human desirability standpoint, she posited an often overlooked question: At what cost? "These require more infrastructure, more energy and more rare materials," she said. "Who are we leaving behind in this process? If you think about how all the economic gains we've had in the last few decades are concentrated on a few, and that half the world is living on \$5.50 a day, the thing we were working on starts to feel a little superfluous."

Juhl explained that designers, "knowing that it's so much easier to tap into our weakness, manufacture a need and capitalize on our willingness to pay," need to check themselves and ensure they are creating long-term health for communities and the planet, not just short-term happiness. Of course, this is easier said than done, as what is good for the planet often conflicts with the incentives of our economic structures. "We think we can't change any elements of the economy, but actually it's nature that we cannot change," she said. "We need to live in harmony with it."

Aligning with the planet
Design research emphasizes the act of speaking with end users to understand their needs. But what about planetary needs? Juhl observed that although we cannot speak to the planet, there are clear, intuitive planetary needs with which we can align our decisions. To this end, Juhl is exploring how to incorporate tangible core sustainability principles into her conversations with clients. "For example, don't increase concentrations of synthetics into the biosphere faster than it can be naturally processed by the Earth, or don't destroy ecosystems or habitats faster than they can replenish themselves," she explained. "These are things you cannot violate, and they apply universally to any company."

The application of such principles necessitates organizational transformation, which must be spearheaded by bold leadership, Juhl said. "When you set a big goal, you're actually, as a leader, creating the space for creativity to flourish and providing permission for experimentation." She mentioned Unilever and Patagonia as examples of organizations that have demonstrated such bold organizational leadership. "As much as I would like to start this process, I cannot. It really needs to start with visionary, courageous leaders who commit to taking responsibility for their entire business system."

Distinguishing needs, desires

The next step in design is taking responsibility for the entire system in which a product or service is created, encompassing everything from the raw materials to the effects on workers, consumers and the planet, Juhl said. "We need to start thinking a little bit more about whether we're creating long-term health, to think about the difference between needs and desires," she said. To illustrate this distinction, Juhl drew from her experience working on an agricultural project. "That project opened my eyes to our aging farming population, our unstable climate and the degradation of our soil and ecological health. What we are doing in agriculture is destabilizing our health in our bodies, and on land, for ourselves and generations to come."

Shortly after, Juhl worked on a technology project that she described as "technology for technology's sake." While

乗じてニーズを生み出し、お金を出させることの容易さを知っているからこそ」、自制を働かせ短期的幸福ではなく社会と地球のために長期的な健全性を確保すべきだと話した。地球に良いことは経済構造上の動機とは矛盾しがちで実行は容易ではない。しかし、人間の手に負えないのは経済ではなく自然だと同氏は語り、地球との協調が必要だと述べた。これを顧客とも共有し、持続可能性の原則を会話の中に取り入れるためのより良い方法を模索し続けている。



Franciacorta, Italy's premium sparkling wine. Franciacorta is an exquisite sparkling wine made in Franciacorta, a hilly region near Lake Iseo in the Lombardy region of northern Italy, close to Milan. Franciacorta is produced in accordance with strict rules and regulations, using solely noble grapes picked by hand, traditional secondary fermentation in the bottle, and slow aging on the lees for no fewer than 18 months, 30 months for single vintage wines, and a grand total of 60 months for Riservas.

The "Franciacorta meets Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo" promotion runs from Friday, April 15 to Thursday, June 30 at

Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo, a Forbes Travel Guide five-star luxury hotel in Nihonbashi.

The Cantonese restaurant Sense Cantonese Dining on the 37th floor offers a weekend dim sum lunch with Franciacorta. K'shiki on the 38th floor features authentic Italian cuisine, and at The Pizza Bar on 38th, a pizzaiolo master chef creates pizzas for customers at an exclusive eight-seat counter. These restaurants all offer unique Franciacorta lineups prepared especially for this promotion, including special pairings. At The Mandarin Oriental Gourmet Shop, located on the first floor, guests can also enjoy Franciacorta paired with hotel-made maritocco buns and focaccia.

Art Museum of Nature and Human Non-Homogeneity

The museum was built in the Nagasakibana Resort campsite in 2020. It encourages us to rethink the fundamental relationship between humans and nature.

● 4060 Mime, Bungotakada-shi, Oita Prefecture, Nagasakibana Resort campsite
Tel: 0978-23-1860
Open hours: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (March – October) / 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (November – February) / Closed on Thursday (March – October) / Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (November – February)
Admission: ¥700 (kids: ¥300)
<http://nature-and-human.art>

Feature ART

KUNISAKI

Oita art museum blends nature, digital technology

By KOHEI HARUGUCHI

Oita Prefecture is one of the regions of Japan where art-oriented community revitalization has taken hold. The art nonprofit Beppu Project, based in the world-famous hot spring city of Beppu, has presented numerous art festivals since the start of its activities in 2005. These include Beppu Contemporary Art Festival Mixed Bathing World (launched in 2009) and Beppu Art Month (held since 2010).

With the Kunisaki Art Festival (held from 2012 to 2014) as a starting point, Oita Prefecture's Kunisaki Peninsula has been home to the creation of six art sites and a new tourism style that enables visitors to experience art while exploring nature-rich areas. Works by world-renowned artists including Yoko Ono and Choi Jeong Hwa were installed at the Nagasakibana Beach Resort campsite, on the northern tip of the Peninsula, and the location has become famous for flowers and art. Inspired by the long-established presence of art festivals in the area, the Art Museum of Nature and Human Non-Homogeneity was built at the Nagasakibana site in 2020. This oddly named museum encourages us to rethink the fundamental relationship be-

tween humans and nature. We spoke with Sadamu Fujioka of Anno Lab, the team behind the creation of the museum's permanent installations.

"When I stayed in the place where the museum was to be built, first of all I was awed by the natural beauty. Nagasakibana is a peninsula jutting out to the land's northernmost point, so you can see the sunrise and the sunset on the horizon from the same spot," Fujioka said. "The sea and the forest are both nearby, too. The museum's declared theme was digital art, but I thought it would be impossible to outdo the natural setting just by installing digital creations."

Fujioka and his colleagues then thought of making something that would reaffirm the beauty of nature through art, like a lens looking at nature from a different perspective. The result was the creation of works beautifully blending nature and digital technology.

The museum has three rooms. In the Sun and Moon Room, the position of a person entering the space is accurately detected with sensors, then the 288 small windows in the roof automatically open or close, and rays of sunlight stream in toward the visitor with pinpoint preci-

sion. The Sea Room uses unique fountains generating high-speed water droplets. Projection mapping is applied with precision to the falling drops, which seem to create animation within the space. In the Forest Room, animations are generated by algorithms using inputs about the wind outside and are projected in the cylindrical space. In each case, environmental information from the museum's surroundings is analyzed and reflected in the production, resulting in an interactive work of art that changes from visit to visit.

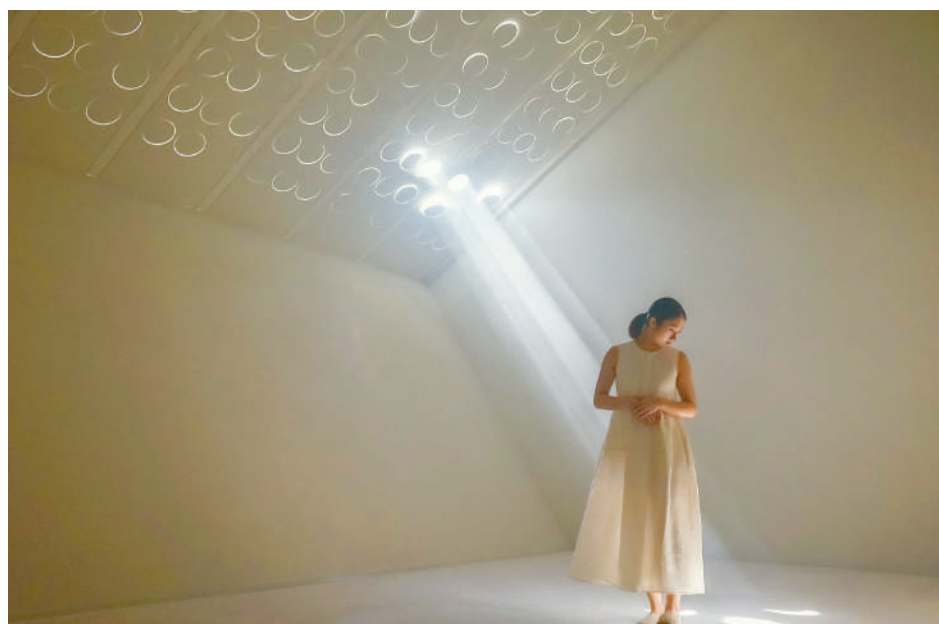
This year saw the launch of "Stone Room," a work of art in which stones outside the museum are treated as a medium. Coordinating with GPS, visitors walk around the area holding stones that vibrate. When they stand in certain places, voice recordings are played, telling stories connected to the sites. Fujioka said: "Kunisaki Peninsula is an area with a deeply rooted stone culture, including spiritual beliefs centered on giant stones. Using stone, an ancient documentation medium, I wanted to create a work tracing the memory of the land. The voice recordings were made through repeated workshops with people from the area."

It is common to see works of art simply placed around an area, but this type of scene is not found on Kunisaki Peninsula. "If you can gain a deep understanding of a region's culture and history and connect them with works of art to create a museum rooted in the area, the museum will surely convey the appeal of art and the beauty of nature more effectively," said Fujioka. Inheriting and passing on regional culture, history and nature may truly be the role of art and of people.

The Art Museum of Nature and Human Non-Homogeneity was built in a nature-rich location at the northernmost point of Kunisaki Peninsula.



Top: In the Forest Room, hand-painted animation is generated automatically and continuously. Bottom: In the Sea Room, projection mapping is applied with precision to falling water. PHOTOS: ANNO LAB



The Sun and Moon Room is designed so that sunlight streams in toward the visitor. The appearance of the room varies according to the day's weather.

● Summary

半島の自然とデジタルが融合する美術館

アートによる地域活性が根付いた土地のひとつが大分県だ。特に国東半島では、「国東半島芸術祭」を皮切りに、地域内に6つのアートのスポットを設置し、自然豊かな土地を巡りながらアートに触れる新たな観光体験を創り出した。芸術祭が根付いたこの地域で、国東半島の長崎鼻リゾートキャンプ場内に「不均質な自然と人の美

術館」が2020年に誕生した。常設作品を手がけたanno labの藤岡定は次のように語る。「美術館の建設予定地に滞在したとき、まず自然の美しさに圧倒されました。最初のテーマはデジタルアートだったのですが、ただデジタル作品を設置するだけでは、絶対この自然には勝てないと思ったんです」。

そこから自然とデジタルが美しく融合する作品が誕生した。部屋に入ると、屋根の288個の小窓が自動開閉し、精緻に検出された鑑賞者の位置にピンポイントで太陽の光が射し込む「太陽と月の部屋」のほか、館内は3つの部屋で構成されている。地域の文化と歴史、そして自然が融合するユニークな美術館となった。



日本語全文はこちら



Son of refugee helped across world

Bradley Busetto grew up in Vallejo, California, the son of an educator father who came to America as an Italian refugee from World War II. He attended Stanford University, where he earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in philosophy.

It was then that he started a long career with the United Nations, first as country manager for the U.N. World Food Programme and then as a United Nations representative to Armenia. It was there that he began the first of many U.N. initiatives to foster innovation and sustainable technology. Busetto then helped design the U.N.'s Joint SDG Fund, and then was named inaugural director of the U.N.'s new global Centre for Technology, Innovation and Sustainability in Singapore. He now lives in Tokyo, where he likes to cycle across the city and enjoy some outdoor and downtime in parks.



Mohandas Gandhi's phrase "be the change in the world you want to see" has inspired Busetto throughout his life.

PHOTOS: HIROMICHI MATONO

Cofounder of SDG Impact Japan applies years of global experience

Bradley Busetto: Green investments, great returns

By TIMOTHY SCHULTZ CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Of all the types of finance, green finance simply sounds ... interesting. Perhaps it is the tension in the name: Like the phrases "teenage werewolf" or "military intelligence," "green finance" is two slightly oxymoronic words describing a single thing. This catches your attention, and leaves you wondering: Can the pursuit of profit (a ruthless endeavor) be environmentally positive (an altruistic action)? Can doing the right thing make shareholders money?

Bradley Busetto is here in Japan to answer that question. Together with Mari Kogiso and Mamoru Taniya, he is one of the founding partners of SDG Impact Japan, the country's first full-service sustainable investment firm. SIJ sees environmental and social challenges as technical limitations; companies that solve them will simply make more money. To Busetto and his team, ESGs aren't obligations, but opportunities.

The first category of opportunity encompasses the innovators. "We're looking for great ideas. For instance, we just jointly announced the first close for an agri-tech/food-tech fund with a Singapore based global venture capital platform. The aim is to find companies developing new technologies that limit the use of inputs (such as water and pesticides) and enable other companies to create a more productive and sustainable food supply," Busetto said. His ambition is broad. "There are many different sectors, we think, that will really profit by seeking these kinds of technologies."

It is the second category of opportunities that make Busetto stand out. SIJ and its partners aren't just targeting good ESG companies; they are also looking for companies not yet leveraging their ESG potential. It is a space few other impact funds

are looking at. "A lot of the ESG funds are more about reporting on things, box-ticking exercises or selecting companies that are already 'good.' They don't focus on the vast majority of companies who haven't really thought about sustainability, so they aren't helping them move forward," Busetto said. "That's what we're focused on. We take an outcome-focused, engagement-focused approach." I was confused — what outcome was he talking about? He got specific. "We're looking at companies in Japan who might not be top of the class in sustainability, but they have room to grow. And we've identified leverage points that can increase their ESG performance, which will also increase their financial performance." Ah, now I understood. It is the oldest game in finance — find an undervalued company. Except now the improved corporate value would come from improving a company's operations via ESG technologies

Busetto is a new arrival here in Japan, a country he sees as a natural fit for his sustainable mission. "Japan has inherent drivers for sustainability just among the people and the culture. We wanted to be at the edge of the spear and help push it along." To Busetto, the sustainable values in Japanese finance are quickly following the sustainable values of Japanese society. "In Japan, one of the first big moves was when [Hiromichi] Mizuno-san at the Japan Pension Fund started aligning their policies on investment toward sustainable indices." He argued that good financial stewardship is just good sustainable investment. It is the same. It is not "either-or," it is "and." "And now, today, we're really at a tipping point, a good place."

What kind of training does a green finance professional need? Short answer: a unique one. Before he joined SIJ, Busetto

wore many hats, including a blue one: He was the highest-ranking U.N. official in Armenia for five years. "With the U.N., I had many roles. I started out working in conflict, then there was the election work," he said. "But all of it could have been called sustainable development in some way." He elaborated about his time in Armenia. "Yes, there was a political angle to that, the free and fair elections, sure. But it was also about figuring out how the U.N. could help the government kick-start the economy and build a more inclusive and broad economy."

At this point, I became a little skeptical. I asked Busetto what all that really meant; in most developing countries, governments "kick-start" a sector by handing it to an oligarch ... or to the president's cousin. He chuckled at my cynicism. "Well, we helped identify sectors that they

could develop, and helped them craft policies that would help those sectors grow," he said. "For example, in Armenia we discovered there was actually a very cool nascent startup tech scene. Armenia had been a node of what we now call 'deep tech' within the former Soviet Union — stuff like astrophysics. So we helped the government nurture that through policies and the U.N. too." From this anecdote and others, he described a career of doing good across the world: nurturing democracy, identifying entrepreneurial opportunities, helping innovators compete. Many government officials only add another layer of bureaucracy to commerce, but Busetto hadn't done that. He spent over 15 years at the U.N. accelerating hundreds of technologies. My skepticism was replaced with admiration.

Now he is here in Tokyo, partnering with excellent asset management firms, helping companies radically improve their value through hands-on investment. He is here to achieve both financial and sustainable return through positive impact for Japanese investors: Just before our interview, SIJ announced it had entered into a capital and business alliance agreement with Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance. "This approach, it's been done before. Others have proven it works," he said. "But it's still new. It's an outcomes-based approach. It's about actually transforming how companies operate and generate profits in a way that is linked to their ESG performance." After I heard Busetto's passion, I understood why they had backed SIJ.

Japanese institutions are always searching for new ways to make more money. Now they can make the world a bit more sustainable, too. Mohandas Gandhi once said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Busetto and SIJ are proving that the same could be said for investments.

Bradley Busetto

Co-CEO, SDG Impact Japan

URL: www.sdgimpactjapan.com

Hometown: Vallejo, California

Years in Japan: less than 1

Summary

グリーン投資で持続可能なリターン実現を目指す

サステナブル投資会社SDGインパクトジャパン(SIJ)の共同設立者の一人、ブラッドリー・ブセット氏にとって、ESGは義務ではなく機会だ。ブセット氏が傑出しているのは、SIJと社パートナーがESG優良企業のみならず、ESGのポテンシャルを発揮し切れていない企業を機会の一つと捉えている点だ。ブセット氏は15年間の国連勤務を含め、グローバルな経歴を持つ。世界のあちこちで、真に必要とされているもの、成長を促すべき分野を見出し、それに

必要な技術を支援してきた。来日してまだ日は浅いが、日本には人と文化の中に持続可能性に対する先天的な原動力があると、同氏が掲げる持続可能性のミッション達成に最適な国だと語った。ここで先頭に立つて持続可能性の推進を支援していきたいというブセット氏。現在、アセットマネジメント会社数社と提携を結びハンズオン投資を行いながら企業の価値向上の手助けをしている。さらに、会社経営と収益性をESGの実績と連動させるべく変革を推進している。

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Shishi odori is a traditional performance art of Iwate, Miyagi and other northeastern prefectures. Originally performed to honor the spirits of deer killed in hunts, the dance portrays a confrontation between a sword-wielding human and a *shishi*, a generic word for four-limbed animals. Today it is performed at festivals in the northeast as well as when people die, to honor their spirits. The city of Tono alone has 13 *shishi odori* troupes, with many variations on the dance and costumes.

PHOTOS: RYO MITAMURA



The shishi mask is a composite of animals such as deer, lions and dragons.

Feature ART

TONO

Iwate event brings traditional dance into present

By KOHEI HARUGUCHI

In the Tohoku region of northeastern Japan, the traditional performance art called *shishi odori* originated four centuries ago as a ceremony by hunters to honor the animals they killed. At some point, this expression of thanks and remembrance for the spirits of all living things came to encompass human spirits as well. The dance is performed at the village festivals that take place in summer and fall.

The city of Tono in Iwate Prefecture has its own variation on the *shishi odori* dance. It was the centerpiece of the Tono Meguritoroge art festival, a tour-style event held for the first time in November 2021 that integrates contemporary art and music and gives participants an up-close window on local culture. Weaving together folk culture, performance art, food, music and other cultural traditions of Tono, the event offers many new opportunities to get involved in carrying on these local traditions.

At a typical art festival, artists converge on a chosen location to create artwork on a curated theme. While artists were invited

to Tono for the Meguritoroge festival, they were asked to delve deep into the culture and history of the Tono region. The festival was thus envisioned as a means of sustaining local culture and connecting traditional performance art with contemporary culture.

Festival co-organizer Gaku Tomikawa left an advertising career in Tokyo to move to Tono in 2016. Today he is a tour guide and exhibit and event planner working to share Tono's rich cultural heritage with a broad contemporary audience. "Shishi odori captivated me when I moved to Tono, and I became a dancer myself," he said. "The dance represents the balance between people and nature, with one dancer playing the sacred beast and another playing a person with a sword. These days humans often try to control nature, but in *shishi odori*, the human is overpowered by the beast. I feel like this attitude of facing nature head-on can offer insight for how to interact sustainably with the present-day world."

Watching the *shishi odori* was a highlight for participants joining the festival's

three days of tours around Tono. In addition, artists put on live performances inspired by the dance. In one, an artist used melodies from the *shishi odori* in an original composition.

Tomikawa suggested that by presenting a traditional performance like *shishi odori* as "art," the Tono Meguritoroge festival has opened up a new avenue for cultural transmission. "All over Japan, fewer people are carrying on local performance arts, and some groups can't even afford to repair their costumes," he said. "In the midst of this crisis, everyone is searching for new ways to get people from outside the local communities involved in traditional performance arts. In that sense, I think the work we put into creating opportunities to enjoy the dance as a part of contemporary culture rather than as something old will help us connect with a wider swath of people." In fact, he said, the festival has already inspired new dancers to join the *shishi odori* troupe.

"It's important to pass on history and culture to the next generation, but not everything should be kept exactly the same



The *shishi odori* for the Tono Meguritoroge festival was held at Tono Furusato Village, a group of traditional houses where visitors can experience daily life in a mountain village. In addition to dancers, the troupe includes musicians playing *taiko* drums, flutes and other instruments. <http://meguritoroge.com/home/>



Musicians performed during the festival in a hundred-year-old house.

over time," he said. "All sorts of changes have probably taken place in these traditions over the course of history. As people living at this particular point in time, I think the important question is how sincerely we can work to keep alive the traditions that we want to see continue."

The Tono Meguritoroge festival will take place in September this year. Organizers say they plan to hold it every year, forging new connections between traditional and contemporary culture.

● Summary

伝統芸能と民俗文化を現代と接続する

岩手県遠野市には、400年続く伝統芸能「しし踊り」がある。この芸能を中心に据え、現代のアートや音楽と融合しながら、地域文化を深く体験するツアー型芸術祭「遠野巡灯籠木（トノメグリトログ）」が2021年11月に開催された。

3日間のツアーで遠野をめぐる参加者は、イベントの

ハイライトとしてしし踊りを鑑賞。さらに音楽家がしし踊りに触発されて制作したライブも行われた。これは遠野という土地の文化や歴史を深く掘り下げることで、地域文化の持続性を保持し、伝統芸能と現在の文化をつなぐ試みだという。特にしし踊りをひとつのアートとして位置づけることで、文化継承における新たな側面を見出

している。なぜなら、全国の郷土芸能は後継者が次々と減少し、地域外の人々も関わることで新たな活路が期待されているからだ。

遠野巡灯籠木は今年9月に開催予定。今後も毎年の開催を通して、地域文化と現代のカルチャーとのつながりを生み出し続けていく予定だという。



日本語全文はこちら

Events



Published on April 25
in The Japan Times



Jamaican Ambassador Shorna-Kay Richards with Masako Mori, special adviser to the prime minister for women's empowerment, who attended the opening of the embassy's exhibition on the contribution of Jamaican women to 60 years of nation-building, part of activities to celebrate Jamaica's 60th anniversary of independence this August.
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Times Gallery

A monthly registry of celebrations, events and milestones at embassies, organizations and companies — a photo album showing you what is happening in Japan.



The ambassador of Azerbaijan, Gursel Ismayilzada, and the chairperson and president of The Japan Times, Minako Suematsu, meet at the newspaper's offices on March 29.
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Albanian Ambassador Gjergj Teneqexhiu hands over to Rep. Minoru Kiuchi a congratulatory letter from the chair of Albania's Foreign Affairs Committee, Mimi Kodheli.
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● Summary

大使館や企業、団体の記念イベントや行事を毎月紹介しています

“Times Gallery”では、在日大使館や企業、団体などの、記念イベントや行事の写真を毎月掲載しています。日本でのどのようなイベントが行われているかを伝える小さな写真集です。写真とキャプションはみなさまからご提供いただいたものです。それぞれの大使館や企業、団体の様子や雰囲気伝わる写真を掲載していますので、ぜひご覧ください。



The ladies of the Tokyo Women's Club visit the Embassy of Mexico, where they were welcomed by Ambassador Melba Pria (first row, center) and learned about the history, culture and gastronomy of Mexico, as well as the status of Mexico-Japan relations.
© EMBASSY OF MEXICO



A delegation headed by Raul Fornes (fourth from right), first vice president of the Cuban National Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, meets with members of the Dragons baseball team, which includes Cuban athletes.
© EMBASSY OF CUBA



To commemorate the 66th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Tunisia, the Embassy of Tunisia holds a reception on March 23, hosted by Ambassador Mohamen Eloumi (fourth from left).
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Swiss President Ignazio Cassis (center) stands with MPower Partners general partner Kathy Matsui (solid dress), Switzerland Global Enterprise chairwoman Ruth Metzler-Arnold (print dress) and members of the SCCIJ Executive Committee at an SCCIJ luncheon on women's empowerment in Tokyo on April 19.
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Czech Ambassador Martin Tomco holds his first meeting with Czech honorary consuls and CCCIJ members. From left: Lukas Zicha, embassy consul; Masahiro Nomura, honorary consul in Sapporo; Tomco; Hidenobu Inamine, honorary consul in Naha; Roman Watanabe, CCCIJ chairman; Atsushi Sasaki, CCCIJ executive director and Ondrej Svoboda.
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