

## The Japan Foundation, Sydney

### Building on the momentum from the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange to develop further programs

The Japanese Film Festival remains a popular fixture in Sydney. This year a total of 19 films were screened, from major studio movies to independent films, attracting 6,600 people in total. In addition, a variety of other events were held, using a diverse number of approaches to introduce Japanese culture, from traditional culture to modern art. These included a lecture and exhibition by the National Living Treasure of Embroidery Fukuda Kiju entitled “World of Embroidery,” a *Kazari Maki-zushi* demonstration, and the launch of “Facetnate!,” a public offering program for new visual artists, with a vision to expand cultural exchange between Japan and Australia through a contemporary arts exhibition.

In the area of Japanese-language education, in collaboration with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, educational resource materials aimed at secondary school students have been created to support Japanese-language teaching, based on the artworks held by the gallery, including Buddhist images and scrolls. Other efforts are being made to support Japanese-language education, including the development and launch of a third phase online Japanese class in which Japanese-



Training session for Japanese-language teachers

language teachers living in remote areas can participate, the implementation of training sessions for Japanese-language teachers, and Japanese speech contests.

The Japan Foundation, Sydney has also cooperated and offered support in such matters as the invitation of keynote speakers on the occasion of international meetings and symposia, including the annual meeting of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia. Support has also been provided for the promotion of research on Japan in Australia and the creation of a network of Japanese and Australian researchers.

## The Japan Foundation, Toronto

### Canada and Japan: introducing mutual points of interest through various artistic activities

The Japan Foundation, Toronto held an exhibition entitled “The Satoyama Story: Vivian Reiss in Japan,” which features work by the eponymous Canadian artist, who spent time living in a small hamlet in Japan, where, through interaction with the inhabitants together with interviews and sittings, she created a series of intensely personal portraits. In addition, as part of an exhibition entitled “The Spirit of *Budo*: The History of Japan’s Martial Arts,” Canadian writer Katherine Govier, who is fascinated by swordsmanship, gave a lecture entitled “My Musashi Pilgrimage,” about her visit to the final resting place of “sword saint” Miyamoto Musashi, and the items and images that she found on her pilgrimage. Also, an exhibition by Japanese artist Takeya Daisuke, who is resident in Canada, entitled “*kara*” was held. The exhibition sought to express the universality and various characteristics of the large cities of both Canada and Japan, by depicting them as viewed from a distance, from the air, or “*sora*” which is another reading of the character for “*kara*,” the name of the exhibition. These exhibitions demonstrated the various artistic activities in which Japanese and Canadian people are involved and were highly praised by Canadians, including those in the



Exhibition and concert with Vivian Reiss

art world.

Furthermore, the Japan Foundation, Toronto, jointly hosted or provided support for a variety of artistic events or film festivals in every region of Canada, and worked to introduce the diversity of Japanese culture through programs at the grassroots level. In the area of Japanese-language education, according to recent surveys the number of opportunities for learning Japanese in Canada – and accordingly the number of Japanese-language students – is rising. The Japan Foundation, Toronto has supported this trend across Canada, including through such activities as the dispatch of a Japanese-language teaching adviser to the province of Alberta.

## The Japan Foundation, New York

### Urban and regional focuses in planning response to current situation is highly evaluated

With the aim of widening the appeal of modern Japanese literature to a wide section of the American public in all regions of the country, the Japan Foundation, New York invited the novelist Kakuta Mitsuyo to give lectures and readings in New York and Seattle. At each venue where Ms. Kakuta appeared – including universities, book stores and book clubs in each city – she engaged in vigorous discussion with the participants. In addition, a film screening tour was arranged for seven universities in the central and western United States, focusing on regions in which there are few opportunities to experience Japanese culture. This event was highly evaluated in each region it visited.

As the Secretariat of Performing Arts Japan, the Japan Foundation, New York supported six touring performances, including a five-city nationwide tour of Bunraku theater, and provided grants for 10 joint creative projects, including a collaboration between Kasai Akira and young US-based dance artists entitled “*Butoh America*.” Furthermore, as part of the ongoing project to dispatch Japanese experts resident in the US



Kato Sachiko and Yoshioka Airi perform in Belem, Brazil

to Central and South America, a total of four groups, including three performance groups active in the US, were dispatched to 12 cities in eight countries across Latin America.

The Japan Foundation, New York has also taken on the role of Secretariat of the American Advisory Committee for Japanese Studies, and through occasions provided by international meetings and symposia such as annual meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, it has worked actively towards the creation of a network of Japanese studies scholars.

## The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

### Great success highlighted by large audience numbers

At the Nisei Week Japanese Festival, the largest festival in North America organized by people of Japanese descent, the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles provided support for the first ever showing and performance of the “Aomori Nebuta Festival.” Not only did the festival serve as a cultural event, attracting an audience of 15,000, it was also a great success in terms of an opportunity for exchange between Japanese and *Nisei* (people of Japanese descent). In the autumn, support was also provided for a 10-performance tour of *Bunraku* theater, which visited five cities. The 3,280 tickets available for the four performances in Los Angeles sold out.

Also *Kanji* lecture and demonstration events were held in five cities in the western United States. A lecture on the history of *Kanji* by Professor Atsuji Tetsuji of the Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies of Kyoto University was held, and Kosaka Hirokazu, Artistic Director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, provided a demonstration of traditional calligraphy. These events combined Japanese-language education elements with cultural experience. In the spring, the *kimono* stylist Tomita Nobuaki conducted a lecture tour, giving six lectures in three cities, entitled, “*Kimono: Sea of Silk – Preserving Tradition and*



Nebuta Festival held in Los Angeles

Modernity,” which incorporated a lecture and kimono fashion show. Both the *Kanji* and kimono events were broadcast as a special feature by local television stations in Los Angeles.

In the area of Japanese-language education, the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles implemented a summer training course for Japanese-language teachers.

In order to realize the creation of an online system for development and training for Japanese-language teachers, a meeting was held with the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers (NCJLT).



## The Japan Foundation, Mexico

### Active performances to provide opportunities to experience Japanese culture to people of all ages

In July, the Japan Foundation, Mexico joined with Cineteca Nacional to hold a special screening of 10 films by Japanese director Imamura Shohei, attracting a total audience of 3,200. Then, from July to September, an Exhibition of Japanese Traditional Pottery at the Museum of Anthropology in Xalapa, in the state of Veracruz, was staged. The museum is known for its collection of relics from the ancient Olmec culture of Veracruz, and the exhibition provided a valuable opportunity to introduce traditional Japanese arts to one of Mexico's important regional cities.

In the autumn, the Japan Foundation, Mexico cooperated with a publishing company to present workshops by Gomi Taro, an author of children's picture books, who is also published in Mexico, in Mexico City and Guadalajara. The participants – adults as well as children – enjoyed having their creativity sparked by Gomi's presentation, and the event and the visit by Gomi were covered widely in local media.

In the area of Japanese-language education, a "Visitor Session" was held in conjunction with a local Japanese-



Workshop by Gomi Taro in Mexico City

language teachers' association, where Japanese residents in Mexico took part in Japanese-language classes as volunteers, helping students practice their conversation skills. Usually there are very few opportunities to converse with Japanese people in this region and the session resulted in increasing the motivation to learn among students of the Japanese language.

In addition, as the only base in the Central American region, in order to cooperate in programs to introduce Japanese culture being implemented in neighboring countries, the Japan Foundation, Mexico also implemented a program to dispatch Japanese experts resident in Mexico to these countries.

## The Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo

### Programs launched to commemorate the Japan-Brazil Year of Exchange (100th Anniversary of Japanese Immigration to Brazil)

The year 2008 marked the 100th anniversary of the arrival in June 1908 of the immigrant ship *Kasato Maru* at the port of Santos, and heralded the Japan-Brazil Year of Exchange (the 100th Anniversary of Japanese Immigration to Brazil). The Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo, launched a number of programs from the beginning of 2008 to commemorate this milestone year. From February to March, *Youkiza*, a traditional Japanese marionette theater company, toured four cities in Brazil, including Sao Paulo, giving performances and holding workshops. The Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo made every effort to provide local support to the theater company, given the importance of boosting an awareness of traditional Japanese culture in many Brazilian people, including those of Japanese descent.

As part of an ongoing series of lectures on Japanese cuisine that began in 2006 entitled "Saberes dos Sabores," in April 2007 the anthropologist Ishige Naomichi and researcher on traditional Japanese cuisine Okumura Ayao were invited from Japan to take part



Lecture and demonstration of Japanese cuisine

in lectures and discussions in three cities, including Sao Paulo. The "Saberes dos Sabores" lecture series concluded in March 2008.

The annual Japanese speech contest generated a great deal of excitement, as usual. In the area of Japanese studies and intellectual exchange, several professors from the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto were invited to Brazil to give a lecture on the theme of comedy and humor in Japanese culture.