

The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome

A broad range of Japanese cultural introductions planned from multiple perspectives

The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome is dedicated to providing a well-balanced and effective introduction to various aspects of Japanese culture, and in FY2007 a variety of programs were implemented.

At the Cultural Institute a number of exhibitions took place, including exhibitions on modern architecture, wood block lithographs, and clay work. In addition, there was also an exhibition of the work of Okabe Masao, one of the exhibitors in the Japan Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Art. In the area of film, there was a retrospective on the work of Naruse Mikio and screenings of films by Ozu Yasujiro, Yoshida Kiju, and Kitano Takeshi. In concerts organized by the Institute, a great variety of genres were showcased, including everything from traditional Japanese music to renaissance music and duos comprising Japanese *wadaiko* and drums.

The Cultural Institute also was active in terms of cooperative programs with external organizations, and organized a concert jointly with the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome, featuring a Japanese pianist and the



Concert by Hida Jimbo (Unit of Hidano Shuichi and Jimbo Akira) © Mario BOCCIA

first clarinetist of the Santa Cecilia National Academy Orchestra, among other artists. Given the increasing interest in Japan in every region of Italy, special efforts have been made to implement and support programs in local regions, and a performance of *Kyogen* theater took place in Bologna, among other events.

With regard to Japanese-language education, Japanese-language classes at the Institute continue to be held in the evenings and on Saturdays for the benefit of working people, and in addition to a wide variety of Japanese-language learning needs, a number of seminars on teaching methods were implemented as a means of supporting Japanese-language education in the regions of Italy.

The Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne

Efforts to introduce modern Japan Active cooperation with other organizations

Focusing on introducing aspects of modern Japanese culture, the Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne has implemented exhibitions, musical events, film screenings, and lectures, as well as endeavoring to widen the learning of the Japanese language.

The “Dialogue Exhibition” held at the Cultural Institute already has a long history of introducing the works of young German and Japanese artists, and in 2007 exhibitions by Sato and Schellhorn, and Suzuki and Schniotalla, were held. The former also went on display at the Japanese-German Center Berlin – the first time for one of the Dialogue Exhibitions to go on domestic tour – and it was very well received. The Cultural Institute also held a lecture by young Japanese architect Fujimoto Sosuke. Following an invitation program for cultural figures, a lecture by Doris Krystof, curator of the K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Museum, was held. She introduced the cutting-edge Japanese art she had seen on her visit to Japan. These programs endeavored to introduce contemporary Japan.

Efforts were also made to engage in intellectual exchange through cooperation with other organizations.



Reading by Tsuji Hitonari of “Waiting for the Sun (Taiyo Machi)” © Ueno Jun

Events included a lecture tour by Japanese novelist Tsuji Hitonari (to Berlin and Munich), cooperation in a “Japanese interpretation seminar” at Mannheim University, “The Japanese Diaspora” implemented at the University of Dusseldorf, and a lecture by Professor Minohara Toshihiro entitled “Post-9/11 Japanese Society.” The Cultural Institute also participated actively in cooperative programs with the City of Cologne.

In the area of performing arts, the Cultural Institute introduced a broad range of events, including everything from pop concerts such as Hida Jimbo and Shang Shang Typhoon!, to Japanese and German modern music concerts, including “Sounds of the Times.” Film screenings are a perennial favorite that attract many cinephiles, and this year there were special screenings of the works of Kitano Takeshi and Kanai Masaru, among others.

The Japan Cultural Institute in Paris (Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris)

A tremendous response to events celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Cultural Institute

Exhibitions in 2007 in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris began with an exhibition of the work of Munakata Shiko. It was followed by another exhibition entitled “Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues,” organized by the Japan Foundation headquarters that focused on exchange between Japan and Europe. In autumn, an exhibition, entitled “From Kuroda Seiki to Fujita Tsuguharu: Japanese Painters in Paris,” opened, after three years’ preparation. All of these events met with a tremendous response from visitors.

In the area of performing arts, the Cultural Institute hosted a variety of events that presented both the traditional and the avant-garde. These included a performance of “Five Days in March” by the one-man theater group Chelfitsch, avant-garde jazz by the Shibusa Shirazu Orchestra, a performance by the *butoh* company Dairakudakan, a performance by the Kongo School of Noh in commemoration of the 10th anniversary, a performance of “*Botan Doro*” (The Peony Lantern) by the Edo Marionette Theater, a performance of “Attic” by theatrical company Rinkogun, a jazz concert by Akiyoshi Toshiko (active in the United States), and the first-ever performance of *Bunraku* at the Cultural Institute.

In terms of film, the largest ever retrospective of the

work of Suzuki Seijun to be shown abroad was screened at the Cultural Institute and the first part of a planned series of events to look back on the history of cinema in Japan featured a “history of the Nikkatsu studio.”

With regard to lectures, the Cultural Institute provided opportunities for lively discussions on various issues related to Japan’s “soft power.” These included a demonstration and lecture by chef Koyama Hirohisa in response to the booming popularity of Japanese cuisine, and a series of lectures on food culture. In addition, the Cultural Institute has made efforts in the area of Japanese-language education, Japanese studies and intellectual exchange, in relation to which it held an international symposium to commemorate the 10th anniversary entitled “New Approaches to Japanese Cultural Policy,” among other events.



Exhibition “From Kuroda Seiki to Fujita Tsuguharu: Japanese Painters in Paris”: Kuroda’s “Portrait of a Woman (Kitchen),” from the University Art Museum of the Tokyo University of the Arts

The Japan Foundation, Budapest

Japan-Hungary Cooperation Forum launched as special program

Based on an agreement reached between the prime ministers of Japan and Hungary in October 2004, the Japan-Hungary Cooperation Forum was established as a body of experts whose aim is to expand exchanges between Japan and Hungary. In order to sustain and develop Japanese-language education in Hungary, a special program that is scheduled to run for six years from FY2007 – as an initiative of the Cooperation Forum – was launched.

The special program is based on contributions from a number of influential Japanese companies, through which comprehensive support is to be provided for Japanese-language education, including support for employment of local Japanese-language teachers, teacher training and development of teaching materials. In the first year of operation in FY2007, teacher employment assistance was provided to four institutions, including secondary education and adult education ones. In addition, teacher training sessions were implemented



Teacher training session

on six occasions, and an outline was decided for the compilation of Japanese-language teaching materials.

Other major activities by the Japan Foundation, Budapest included using the office for cultural lectures five times a year, renting cinemas in the city to screen films on 19 occasions, and holding photographic panel exhibitions in regional cities on six occasions. Eight Japanese-language courses have been provided at the Japan Foundation offices, and almost 120 students have come to the office to audit these courses.

The Japan Foundation, London

Implementing a rich variety of projects, including a film festival

New pilot projects include surveys of private sector corporations

In FY2007, the Japan Foundation, London implemented a wide range of projects, focusing on those that introduce modern Japanese culture in a variety of formats.

Projects included a touring exhibition entitled, “Passage to the Future: Art from a New Generation in Japan,” a drama reading of “Tokyo Notes” by playwright Hirata Oriza, and a touring Japanese film festival, “A Life More Ordinary.” In addition, through the lecture series “Japanese Cinema for Busy People,” the Japan Foundation, London, offered the chance to gain an overview of Japanese cinema.

In the area of Japanese-language education, in addition to formalizing training for Japanese-language teachers into a series, based on the comprehensive set of teaching resources to support the GCSE curriculum known as CHIKARA, which was developed and compiled last fiscal year, a new course entitled “Talking Contemporary Japan” has been established in which advanced students



“Tokyo Notes” drama reading

learn Japanese through film and short novels. These are part of the efforts of the Japan Foundation, London, to develop programs that pay careful attention to the balance between teacher and student.

In terms of new activities, a program was launched to dispatch Japan specialists resident in the United Kingdom to the Middle East, and in collaboration with the Office for Project Development and Corporate Partnership a survey on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities was implemented targeting Japanese companies in the UK.

The Japan Foundation, Cairo

Participation-oriented projects

Forming a cultural bridge through finely-tuned support

The Japan Foundation, Cairo, organized a number of exhibitions, workshops, lectures and demonstrations about a variety of Japanese traditions, including paper making, kites, calligraphy and craft work. As well as introducing the lifestyles and culture of Japan, activities were also implemented to introduce modern Japan, including screenings of animated films targeting a young audience, broadcasts of Japanese television dramas, and a trumpet concert combined with electronic music. In particular, the kite workshop given by Ohashi Eiji, a kite specialist invited from Japan, proved very popular. Participants not only attended a workshop on kite making, but also took part in a kite flying event for Japanese and Egyptian children at the Pyramids of Giza. A kite train was let loose in the skies over the Pyramids and the event was a real bridge between Japan and Egypt.

In the area of Japanese-language education, the Japanese-language courses run for the general public in



Kite flying against the backdrop of the Pyramids

Cairo and Alexandria by the Japan Foundation, Cairo, have proved very popular. Around 600 students have been accepted onto the full range of courses. Most are beginners, but some are taking courses at advanced levels. The “Middle East Seminar on Japanese Language Education,” which targets Japanese-language teachers in the Middle East, attracted 57 participants this year, and also contributed to maintaining the network of Japanese-language teachers in the Middle East and to boosting skills.