

Letter From NEW YORKERS

When the White House Came to Japan

by Justin Tedaldi

About 30 minutes west of Orlando in Clermont, is the Presidents Hall of Fame. This informative, family-friendly spot contains realistic wax figures, hundreds of pieces of political memorabilia and a roadside replica of Mount Rushmore.



Its centerpiece is a 60-foot long scale reproduction of the White House with full interior, which has taken over 40 years to research, design and construct. The Miniature White House was created by John and Jan Zweifel of Orlando, Florida, their family and hundreds of artisans, creating what the hall describes as "a gift to the people."

"John Zweifel developed its concept in 1956," said Tommy Candido, art director for the hall. "In the 1960s, he started putting drawings together and doing the research. There's one story where he found some blueprints in the basement of a library in Chicago. The Secret Service came because they were supposed to have it, but nobody knew about it."

The miniature toured Japan in July 1995 at a Smithsonian Institute-sanctioned display in Chiba celebrating U.S.-Japan history on the 140th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Amity. Attending the opening event were Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, Walter Mondale and Prince and Princess Akishino.

Candido noted that Zweifel, who is also the hall's owner, "has plans for the U.S. Tricentennial in 2076. He has passion and wants this to re-teach the people that the United States is more than politics; the replica and the museum transcends politics. If there's anything in existence that is bipartisan, it's here."

The Presidents Hall of Fame is located at 123 N Hwy 27 in Clermont, and is open seven days a week. For more information, visit their homepage at www.thepresidentshalloffame.com or email phofjz@gmail.com.

(Justin Tedaldi has written about Japanese arts and entertainment since 2005. For more of his stories, visit http://jetaany.org/magazine.)

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Arita-yaki Ceramic Artist Yuji Obata's Sakura Exhibit

An exhibit of Arita-yaki ceramic artist Yuji Obata was held at the Onishi Gallery in Chelsea (521 West 26th Street; 212-695-8035). The main theme of the exhibit was sakura (cherry blossoms), a theme that Obata has worked on and developed throughout his career as a ceramic artist. This exhibit, Obata's second in New York, present-

ed his 'Obata-pink' sakura ceramics beautifully.

Obata has worked on sakura-themed ceramic art for 25 years. In the 1990s, Obata's use of sakura in Arita-yaki ceramics first came into the limelight. Currently, at the four or five national exhibits held per year, Obata's work is extremely popular

and well-received. "There was a time when the color pink was not accepted by the public. However, times and lifestyles changed and the color became appreciated. I'm glad I was born in this era," commented Obata. At this exhibit, along with his sakura ceramics, Obata also presented fruit- and fish-themed



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ceramics. This summer, Obata also held an exhibit in New Delhi that was a massive success.

After graduating from Aoyama Gakuin University Law School in 1984, Obata worked at one of Japan's main optical equipment manufacturers, but quit after three years to pursue the art of ceramics. During the next 33 years, Obata developed a simple and mellow style of ceramics, and his art gradually increased in popularity. At the Onishi Gallery exhibit, one of Obata's small sakura teacups could be bought at around \$200. In Japan, Obata's ceramics are bought as gifts for family ceremonies, graduations, and holidays. In New York, they will also be gaining attention as a gift to oneself or a special someone.

The exhibit was held until November 28. (Written by Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Yudai Kaneda)



Hiroko Koshino "A Touch of Bauhaus"

The exhibition "Hiroko Koshino: A Touch of Bauhaus", curated by Kyoko Sato, started on November 1 and will last until December 1 at the White Box Gallery in lower Manhattan (329 Broome Street, 212-714-2347).

Fashion designer Hiroko Koshino, 81, was an iconic leader of the fashion industry in Post-World War II Japan. Her creativity comes from her passion for drawing ever since she was a child. She has produced well over 1,900 pictorial works, and this is the first time her paintings are being exhibited in New York. In this exhibition, you will be able to see her 24-meter-long Sumi-ink painting, which was drawn at her home in Ashiya, Hyogo prefecture. You will also be able to see about 30 of her new paintings, as well as 20 more which were previously introduced in her past collections. Hiroko Koshino is also very good at singing long epic songs and playing shamisen, a Japanese traditional instrument. At the gallery, you will be able to hear her shamisen music playing in the background.

The philosophy of Bauhaus School, established in Germany in the early twentieth century, has influenced many artists all over the world. Sato, Director of East Asia Programming at the gallery, said "We used the name Bauhaus for this exhibition because we thought Hiroko's creativity for fashion and art matches the philosophy of Bauhaus School." (Written by Kaoru Ishiguro/Translated by Chikako Iwasaki)

Arisa Odaka at Radio City Music Hall



The seasonal tradition of New York City's Holiday "Christmas Spectacular" Show at Radio City Music Hall started November 15. The Rockettes and Ensemble dancers create a fairy tale world, and their gorgeous performance is popular among children and adults alike. Among the more than 50 dancers for this performance, there is only one Asian dancer. Arisa Odaka, 35, is origi-

nally from Tokyo, Japan. She was in the Broadway musical "The King and I" three years ago alongside Ken Watanabe, who played the King. This is her ninth year in New York and her second opportunity to perform on this dream stage. She will perform until January 1, the last day of the performance, except for Thursdays. (Written by Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Chikako Iwasaki)

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