

The Tale of Genji: A Japanese Classic Illuminated; Opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

On March 5, the Metropolitan Museum opened a major exhibition, "The Tale of Genji: A Japanese Classic Illuminated," centered around Japan's most celebrated work of literature, The Tale of Genji. The exhibition features more than 120 masterpieces gathered from 32 museums, temples and individual collections from Japan and within the United States. The Tale of Genji is said to be one of the oldest novels in the world. The romantic

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story between Hikaru Genji and the princesses is told with a sophisticated language, humor and wit, attracting readers over many centuries. This exhibit includes National Treasures and works recognized as Important Cultural Properties that are on view outside of Japan for the first time. One will be able to examine the changes in Japanese art brought by this story written around 1000 A.D. by Murasaki Shikibu (circa 978-1019). The exhibition is open until Saturday, June 16.

This showcase is the most comprehensive of all the art exhibitions held overseas theming The Tale of Genji, displaying arts of different genres including paintings, calligraphy, dyed fabrics and lacquer art created within a thousand years. Additionally, it includes the palanquin used when Atsuhime married Tokugawa shogun, ukiyo-e prints and modern manga. The exhibit aims to introduce visitors to the sacred and elegant atmosphere of the Heian period (794-1185) illustrated by the legendary female writer, Murasaki Shikibu. The exhibition is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Japan Foundation, with special cooperation by the Tokyo National Museum and Ishiyamadera Temple.

(Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Ai Omae)

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Photo: Ryoichi Miura

'Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon' Makes Broadway Debut

Justin Tedaldi

VOICES From THE NEW YORKERS

On March 29 and 30, "Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon the Super Live" premiered with three sold-out performances at the Play Station Theater. This dazzling musical adaptation of the megahit anime and manga franchise, which has generated \$5 billion in merchandise sales to date, featured a talented all-female cast (including for the male roles) performing in Japanese.



"At its core, 'Pretty Guardian

Sailor Moon' is about strong girlfriends banding together to fight for what they believe in...they are the ultimate example of 'girl power,'" said show producer Takaharu Uera. This universal theme was reflected in the wide diversity of the audience, who were overjoyed to see their heroines come to life.

Innovatively directed and choreographed by TAKAHIRO (Madonna's Sticky & Sweet Tour) with book by Akiko Kodama (Takarazuka Revue Company) and music by HYADAIN (pop groups Momoiro Clover Z and AKB48), these performances also marked the first time a 2.5D musical, a genre based on popular contemporary Japanese properties like manga, anime and video games, was performed on a New York stage.

First published by creator Naoko

Takeuchi in 1991, the manga is now localized in more than 14 countries and released as an anime in more than 50 countries around the world, according to Naho Yamada, general manager of Kodansha USA Publishing, which ran a packed pop-up store at the theater displaying the newest volume of the "Sailor Moon Eternal Edition" collection and other exclusive goods that had thousands of fans eagerly lining up before and after the shows.

"We are happy that fans of all ages have the opportunity to experience 'Sailor Moon' in new ways and that it continues to be a worldwide phenomenon," said Yamada.

For more information, visit <http://sailormoon-official.com/stage/superlive/us/>. (Justin has written about Japanese arts and entertainment in New York since 2005. For more of his stories, visit <http://jetaany.org/magazine>.)

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Japan Night

on the Same Day as Japan Day @ Central Park

May 12

The 13th annual outdoor event "Japan Day @ Central Park" will be held on Sunday, May 12, featuring Japan Run and the Japan Day Festival. The purpose of this festival is to introduce Japanese culture and to create an opportunity for Japanese and American citizens to interact with each other.

This year, an additional event called "Japan Night" will be added, and concert performances by popular artists will be held at two venues in Manhattan.

One featured artist is MISIA, a Japanese diva who won the 60th Japan Record Award for the 20th anniversary of her debut last year. Another artist that will be performing is lead vocalist HYDE of L'Arc-en-Ciel. Among the artists that are well-known in the United States is Wagakki Band, a "Japanese musical instrument band" that unites Japanese musical instruments and rock who will also be on stage. Tickets were initially released to the public on Friday, March 22 at 10:00 a.m. for both venues.

MISIA's performance will be held at Sony Hall (235 West 46th Street) from 9:00 p.m. (doors open at 8:00 p.m.), and Puffy AmiYumi will be welcoming special guests. The admission fee is \$40-45 and there is also a V.I.P. ticket. Visit www.ticketmaster.com for details.

The performances of HYDE and Wagakki Band will be held at the Playstation Theater (1515 Broadway) from 6:00 p.m. (doors open at 5:00 p.m.). The admission fee is \$35-40 and there is also a V.I.P. ticket. Visit www.axs.com for details.

The event is hosted by The Japan Foundation, Disk Garage, Gorgeous Entertainment, Cool Japan Music and sponsored by the Kinoshita Group. The program for "Japan Day @ Central Park," which will be held at noon, will be announced soon. A famous entertainer from Japan is scheduled to appear. (Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Mari Kawaguchi)

Capturing the Wrinkles of Life and the Form of the Male Body Photographer Miki Takashima



Miki Takashima

Miki Takashima was born in Yokohama, Japan and majored in Space Design at the Kuwasawa Design School. When she was a student at Kuwasawa, she made a trip to Europe for study and recorded the landscapes, architecture and lifestyles of the different countries using her SLR camera. Unexpectedly, her photographs seemed to capture everything exactly as she wanted, and this initiated her deep dive into the field of photography. She had liked to draw from a young age but never enjoyed coloring in her artwork. She realized that using a camera, she could create a picture with perfect coloration with just the press of a shutter, which is why she deemed it the perfect medium for her to express herself.

After briefly holding a job as a photo retoucher at a printing company, she worked as an assistant of a commercial photographer, and then she became a freelance photographer. She then moved to America in order to focus on photography of the fine arts and has lived in New York ever since. She is currently working on

four different personal projects, each of which is a collection of photographs that conveys a unique aspect of life.

Her first project is entitled "Time on the Skin," which are photos of people's wrinkles. Her photos intend to celebrate old age as beauty, with lines on the skin representing personality and life.

Her second project is entitled, "Body." She questions society's different views of the female vs. male body by focusing on the power of the male body. Her silhouette-like photographs highlight the male body's various curves, emphasizing that the male body can have beauty similar to that of females.

Her third project is entitled "Landscape." Before living here, she knew New York only as an extremely urban, busy city. However, she eventually realized that there is exquisite nature located just outside the city, and this project strives to highlight this "other side" of New York.

Her fourth project is entitled "Interior." With the idea that one's home acts as a window to

not only their daily lifestyle, personality and beliefs, but also their culture and the state of society, she takes photographs of the interior of people's homes. She also writes a column for the Japanese architectural magazine "Jyuutaku Kenchiku," with the purpose of introducing the diversity of interior spaces to Japan.

It has been three years since Miki Takashima moved to New York in order to truly express herself through the photography medium. Currently, her goal is to find a place in New York where she can present her work in its full beauty.

Miki Takashima's work can be viewed on her website, www.mikitakashima.com.

(Written and Photographed by Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Yudai Kaneda)

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