

# THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



## Advancing Corporate Governance in Japan Keidanren Discussed in New York Seminar

The Consulate General of Japan in New York held a seminar on April 9 regarding the corporate governance improvement in Japan, and how the private sector is responding. Keynote speakers and panelists from Keidanren, the most influential business federation in Japan, included Takeshi Kunibe, Chairman of the Board, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group; Takashi Hibino, Chairman of the Board, Daiwa Securities Group; Shinya Katanozaka, President and CEO, ANA HOLDINGS; Etsuko Tsugihara, President and CEO, SUNNY SIDE UP and Hajime Matsukura, Executive Vice President and Member of the Board NEC Corporation.

At the opening speech, Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi quoted lyrics from

the song "The Times They Are a-Changin'" by Bob Dylan to describe how the Japanese economy has changed, such as through Abenomics. A lecture by keynote speakers Kunibe, Hibino and Katanozaka followed. Kunibe, Chairman of the Board, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, introduced a societal progression of 5.0 for SDGs, and emphasized the exponential growth of outside board members and female directors. "As a representative of Keidanren, I can say that those who progress create a better economic environment, which attracts overseas investors," he said. Hibino, Chairman of the Board, Daiwa Securities Group, talked about female workers getting higher positions, and stated how they now have 21 female

branch managers out of the 117 branch managers in Daiwa Securities.

Katanozaka, President and CEO, ANA HOLDINGS, introduced the history of his company. The company started its business with two helicopters, and now, 67 years later in 2019, they have 300 passenger aircrafts. The company used to have a deficit balance for international flights since they started their service in Washington D.C. in 1986, but now, they are making a profit across 43 cities in the world. Katanozaka said "The biggest point to success was to keep changing. Please invest in our country's business from overseas."

There was a question from an audience member about the level of Japan's corporate governance in the world. Kunibe, Chairman of the Board, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, replied that "What's good for the buyer is also good for the seller," meaning what benefits one party brings a great benefit to all, which is a characteristic of Japanese-style corporate governance. (Article by Ryoichi Miura / Translated by Chikako Iwasaki)

## Influenced by Artexpo New York "I try my best to resist external influences on my artworks..."

Cookie of Yaseibakudan Displays Nikugusootome

Cookie of Yaseibakudan, the Comedian of Yoshimoto Creative Agency Co. Ltd, displayed his artwork in the 41st annual Artexpo New York, held at Pier 90 on the West Side of Manhattan from April 4 to the 7. We had an interview with Cookie on Friday, the opening night of the Expo. (Interview by Yukiko Takada / Photograph by Ryoichi Miura)

**Congratulations on appearing at Artexpo New York!**

Why thank you.

**You had been chosen as one of the "Five Must-See Artists" in this year's Artexpo. How do you feel about this?**

The moment I heard about it, I couldn't understand how big of a deal this was, but after being complimented from various people, I came to



draw, and I'm not very particular about it. But since this is a self-portrait, and since my facial features are not as even as Mr. Mokomichi Hayami's, I drew it from the monster side. Even with a monster-like face, if it is drawn cute, it's cute; meanwhile, a monster remains a monster; something like that.

**Is that your original concept, or did you come up with it just now?**

Apologies, I did think of this now.

**In your last interview, you had said that you see New York as the "center of now".**

Of course, it is. Major trends begin in New York, rather than Tokyo.

**How will the energy of New York have an effect on your next artworks?**

I try my best to resist external influences on my artworks, but I think it will have some effect. In New York, don't the buildings stand side by side and cramped, unlike Japan? After seeing that, I thought about how from now on I will cram my artworks together when displaying them. That is the impression I have of New York. Thank you so much! Thanks for the feedback! This is great, thank you!



realize little by little. I was very happy.

**It seems like next time, you will be able to hold your personal exhibition "Cookie Land" in New York, in addition to the ones opening in Asia.**

It would be great if I could receive positive reactions from this exhibit. I hope this will be the start of something new!

**What kind of questions did you receive from New Yorkers?**

They seemed confused about why I would use the word "kuso" in the artwork. I don't know English, but when I tried to explain thoroughly, they seemed to understand me.

**What message would you like to deliver to New Yorkers through your artwork?**

I basically just draw what I want to

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## Expressing the Catabolism of Daily Life Contemporary Artist Chihiro Ito

Chihiro Ito (38), a contemporary artist taking part in a rising artist training program of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs, came to NYC last September, and will be staying for a year. His art is characterized by bold black borders, and his activities diverge in different fields, such as collaboration with musicians, chefs and literary arts. I joined him in his studio in Brooklyn on February 18. (Interview and photograph by Kaoru Komi / Translated by Mari Kawaguchi)



Chihiro Ito  
http://chihiroito.tumblr.com

**Are you having a busy time in New York?**

Yes. The theme for this program is my research on "Fluxus", along with my own artwork. I will have a private exhibition in Portugal for the tenth time, and I will be there the day after tomorrow. I haven't been there in a while, but this time I am going because it is fairly close. I will display photographs of Latin American vegetables called tomatillo in the windows of buildings like moving frames. In addition, some of my illustrations and serial writ-

ings will be exhibited.

**Your parents are sculptors; was art something you always held close?**

As a child, I watched my parents enjoy art, and I myself drew pictures without learning. My debut was a group exhibition when I was a student at Musashino Art University, and my first private exhibition was after graduation at a gallery cafe called Suikato in Asagaya, Tokyo. In three years I privately exhibited there 11 times, and then I had nothing to draw, so I began writing.

**How did you get interested in "Fluxus" of the 1960s?**

When I was studying for university entrance exams, there was a special feature on using black colors in a magazine called "Studio Voice." At the time, gentle expressions were becoming popular, and people around me did not use black because it spoiled other colors. People would say that my art using black had no expression at all, but all the people of "Fluxus" used black, and that really saved me.

**You say "Art arises when the eyes of human beings and the eyes of dogs come together"**

Contemporary art has a strong element of trying to understand it with your brain. From the artist's point of view, I think it is not only the brain, but also the strong energy of action. However, this act of following your intuition is not enough. Since I came here, many artists have said to me, "Logic is important to American contemporary art, so make sure you read the commentary." This probably means that thoroughly ruminated art is what stimulates people's intuition, so I have started to think a little more about my artwork before I produce it.

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