

The Life of HOKUSAI

Performing arts productions commemorating the 260th anniversary of the birth of Katsushika Hokusai



PROJECT SUMMARY

Katsushika Hokusai is one of Japan's most famous painters. His masterpiece "Kanagawa Okinamiura" (The Great Wave) has comparable fame as da Vinci's Mona Lisa. He is also the only Japanese selected as one of the 100 most influential people of the century, along with Edison and Einstein by Life magazine. "The Life of HOKUSAI" is a non-verbal stage work that depicts the inner life of Hokusai, who had accomplished an incredible feat. In 2020, we planned to bring "The Life of HOKUSAI" to the world as a live performance to coincide with the 260th anniversary of Katsushika Hokusai's birth. However, due to the spread of the new coronavirus, we had to make a painful decision to cancel the live performance. But now, we are bringing this to the world as the video work.

The storytellers of this non-verbal stage work are; Internationally acknowledged performance artist Katsumi Sakakura, Dancer Kato Karasu, Satsuma Biwa player Kamata Kunsui, Taiko drummer Kobayashi Taro and Actress Manase Haruka. Tsugaru Shamisen player Yoshida Brothers is making a special appearance.

The combination of the live performance with the state-of-the-art projection live technique resulted in the novel performing arts style that the world had never seen before. This artwork to commemorate the 260th anniversary of Hokusai's birth was made so relevant by inviting Kentaro Shimizu, the multiple international film festival winner as the director of the stage and documentary film, and Noshi Okazaki, who has a passionate global fan base as a character designer.

Hokusai's message to us 200 years ago is so meaningful and necessary in today's world. "The Life of HOKUSAI" sends out a new Japonism to the world!

STORY

Hokusai, a Japanese artist, had painted many masterpieces with an indomitable spirit after having suffered from a stroke, been unable to hold his brush, and had lost everything in a massive fire. He believed that he was the bridge between energies of heaven and earth and that he was the incarnation of a dragon! He had had nothing to fear until the sudden death of his wife... He was so absorbed in painting and had not expressed his appreciations to his wife, Koto, who had supported him so devotedly. The year after Hokusai had recovered from his stroke, Koto died suddenly. He had regretted her death so profoundly and asked himself,

"What significance does it have to win the recognition as an established painter?"

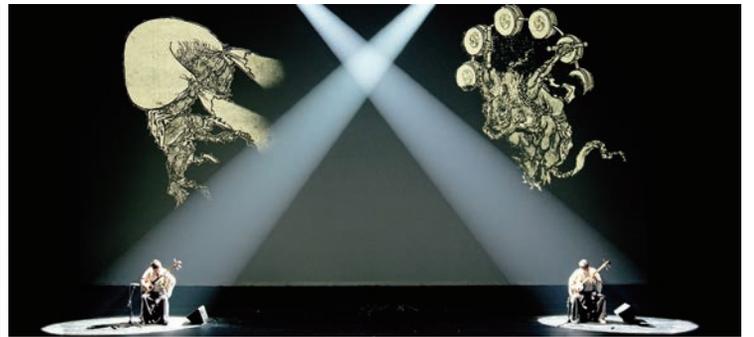
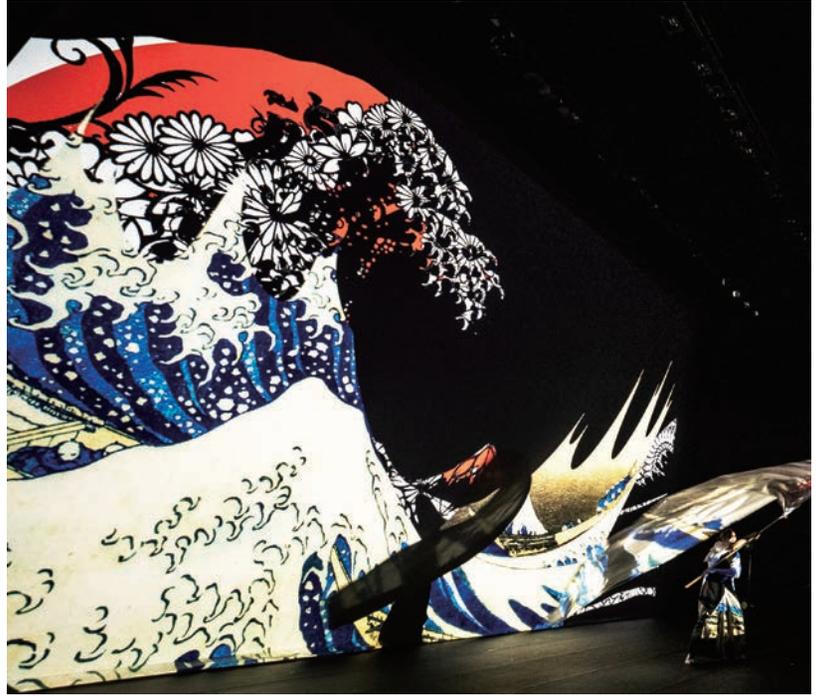
"Have I sent my loved one away peacefully?"

Hokusai had such inner dialogues as he drew the dragon in his last piece, "Dragon over Fuji" What did Hokusai find there?

DESCRIPTION

Hokusai painted many pictures with the motif of dragons. However, none of his dragons holds a Cintamani stone: a wish-fulfilling jewel (Note: 1). Even the dragon in his last piece, we do not see the stone. This performance, which unlocks this mystery based on historical facts, is depicting Hokusai's true character and delivers a message to people all over the world about what matters in our lives, which we tend to lose sight of in this chaotic world.

Note :1 A pearl of treasure that is said to make any wish come true if held. Dragons are usually drawn with a jewel (a globe like a crystal ball) in their hands in artworks.



KATSUMI SAKAKURA



GAKYOROUJIN (the old man mad about painting) Hokusai. What we see in his last piece is the dragon raising his tender eyes to heaven. Why had he painted the dragon in such a manner that was different from his previous works? I had asked this question to myself during the process of this artwork creation. There was a moment when the boundary between Hokusai and myself disappeared, and I was able to unravel this mystery. He had finished his last dragon wholeheartedly to find the answer to the universal theme "What really matters in our lives?". This artwork is assuming the role to deliver this critical Hokusai's message to the world. I hope this artwork sends the reminder to people

worldwide to find what really matters in your life which we tend to lose sight of in this chaotic world.

< Profile >

Born in 1963 in Nagoya City. An artist expresses the unique "movement, rhythm, and spirituality" of traditional Japanese culture in a comprehensive art form. He has invented "Projection Live", the world's first synchronization of video and performance, and is highly acclaimed globally as an originator. He has been invited to perform in 41 countries worldwide and appeared on TV programs in 21 countries. He has performed at global events such as the opening ceremony of the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan and the opening ceremony of the IOC General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur. He has also given lectures titled "What is real Japanese COOL?" both in Japan and overseas (University of Tokyo, Moscow State University, SOAS University London, Aoyama Gakuin University, Nagoya Gakuin University, etc.).

KENTO SHIMIZU



Katsushika Hokusai had always challenged himself and tried new things, and Katsumi Sakakura is exploring new ways of Japanese coolness with his unique style. I am honoured to have been involved in the work that fuses the aspirations of these two artists. This year marks the 260th anniversary of Hokusai's birth. Although the world is facing an unprecedented situation and the future is yet unpredictable, some cultures and ideas might disappear if we stop disseminating our messages. In this predicament world, it is so relevant for us to deliver the new Japonism to the world.

< Profile >

In 2019, his short film "Drifting Post" won the Best Foreign Language Short Film Award at the Nice International Film Festival and screened at 17 film festivals worldwide. He receives high praise globally for his beautiful and artistic filmmaking and direction that captures human nature's subtleties. In recent years, he has been involved in the "Universal Cinematic VR Idea Competition" and the "YouTube VR Creator Lab", a global project sponsored by Google, and is highly regarded not only for his direction but also for his authorship and planning skills.

TAKASHI OKAZAKI



I am very honoured to have been nominated by Katsumi Sakakura, a world-renowned performer, to create the main character "Hokusai" for "The Life of HOKUSAI". Ever since I started my carrier as an illustrator, I have loved the unique lines drawn by Katsushika Hokusai. I have always been conscious of them in my drawings, so I was very excited when I heard that Mr Sakakura wanted me to draw the Hokusai character. This character's universe is not the Hokusai of the past, but a new heroic GAKYOROJIN (an old man mad about painting), "Sakakura - Hokusai," who is a master of the brush.

I am looking forward to bringing excitement to the world through this performing arts work with this character.

<Profile>

Born in 1974, Takashi Okazaki is the author, illustrator, cartoonist, and character designer of "AFRO SAMURAI". Graduated from Tama Art University with a degree in sculpture. In 1999, his manga "AFRO SAMURAI", which had been serialized in the self-published magazine "Know-how", was made into an animated movie with Samuel L. Jackson as producer and voice actor. The TV broadcast of this movie in North America (SPIKE TV) was highly acclaimed. The sequel "AFRO SAMURAI: RESURRECTION" was nominated for the 61st Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Award in the Feature Animation category.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

"The Life of HOKUSAI" is the performing art commemorating the 260th anniversary of Katsushika Hokusai's birth.

Performers: Katsumi Sakakura (performer), Karin Kato (dancer), Kunsui Kamada (satsuma biwa player), Taro Kobayashi (taiko drummer), Haruka Mase (actress) Special Appearance: Yoshida Brothers (Tsugaru shamisen player)

Composition, Direction, Choreography: Katsumi Sakakura

Film Director: Kento Shimizu

Director of Photography: Takeshi Tsuji

Character Design: Takashi Okazaki

Music: Shuichiro Fukuhiro

Assistant Director: Atanas Ibba Mantchorov

Art/Costumes: KIRIE

Assistant Choreographer: Karin Kato

CG production: Animation Cafe

Stage director: Takuya Shimoju

Sound: Takuhiro Yoshimura

Lighting: Yoshio Nakamura

Production: Hiroki Otani

Title cooperation: Miho (calligrapher)

Music cooperation: Waccha

Still photography: Ryosuke Kanesaka, Katsumi Hirabayashi

Material support: Eiji Sakai (Hanzo Co., Ltd.),

Satoru Kobayashi Sanzaemon (Woman's body calligrapher)

Supervisor: Mitsuru Uragami (Uragami Sokyudo)
Technical support: Panasonic Corporation
Support: Zion Co., Ltd.
Planning and Production: Global Business Lab, Inc.
Stage Producer : Norifumi Ban (Showbiz Inc.)
Film Producer: Yeongsu Jeong (Rim Entertainment Inc.)
Executive Producer: Shin Sugimoto (Global Business Lab Inc.)
Performance Official Website:<https://hokusai.world/>

If you have any questions about this project or would like to interview the director, performers, or filmmakers, please contact the address below.

HOKUSAI Project
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