SAPPORO INTERNATIONAL ART FESTIVAL

2012.DEC

Creative City Sapporo International Art Festival Executive Committee
Greetings

The global economic crisis and the triple earthquake-tsunami-nuclear disaster that struck Japan in March 2011 prompted many of us to reflect on our lives and realize we’re at a major turning point that will bring changes to civilization.

With this in mind, we residents of Sapporo should be proud of our city, which is seen by many as Japan’s most attractive city, and work to pass a better environment on to future generations.

In order to achieve this, we must create new industries and new cultures with our fertile imaginations, through exchanges with people in Japan and elsewhere.

As an impetus for change, we hope to make the Sapporo International Art Festival a unique event that will promote local creativity. We will tap into our creativity and ingenuity, engaging in culturally and artistically creative activities so that we can truly experience the joy of participation.

We have appointed internationally renowned artist Ryuichi Sakamoto as guest director of the Sapporo International Art Festival 2014, and preparations for the event are in full swing.

In its role as host, the City of Sapporo will work hard to embody the theme of the festival to be presented by Mr. Sakamoto, as it strives to promote local creativity based on resident autonomy.

Fumio Ueda  
President  
Creative City Sapporo International Art Festival  
Executive Committee

Mayor of Sapporo  上田文男
Along with further promoting art and culture among Sapporo residents and supporting spiritually rich lives in the city, we would like to create new businesses and lifestyles that fully utilize the many resources Sapporo has to offer. As a way to show the world the many charms and attractions of this city, we will organize the International Art Festival as part of the activities conducted under the Creative City Sapporo initiative. The 4 main goals are as follows:

1. Creating unique lifestyles in Sapporo filled with art and culture
   Provide many opportunities where locals can experience and see globally advanced high-quality art and culture.

2. Nurturing people to support Sapporo’s unique art and culture
   Give locals the opportunity to interact with artists from all over Japan and the world and support local artists’ education and development.

3. Finding and creating new aspects of Sapporo’s attractiveness and value through the power of art and culture
   Use art to transmit the many charms of Sapporo, such as its northern climate, history, traditional culture, abundant natural environment and metropolitan resources, and further highlight the attractions of the city and create new values.

4. Attracting and interacting with various people that represent the Creative City Sapporo initiative
   By confronting global urban challenges and creating/displaying a unique form of advanced art, the global presence of Sapporo will become stronger regarding art and culture, leading to various human resources that could support the Creative City Sapporo initiative gathering in and interacting with Sapporo.

Utilizing Sapporo’s attractiveness as an advanced city and its abundant nature, we have made the two resources City and Nature the basic concept.

We have set 5 aims of development for promoting the International Art Festival among residents of Sapporo and tourists, with the aim of making it a sustainable and regular event.

1. To host a globally advanced contemporary art exhibition that fuses various categories of art and culture
   While making international contemporary art the main focus, the event will merge various cultural genres, such as music and performing art, and exhibit them in art and cultural facilities, as well as many types of public locations and natural environments in the city.

2. To cooperate with existing art and culture programs
   Cooperate with many existing art and cultural programs to broaden the range of the Art Festival.

3. To cooperate with tourist events that provide experience of Sapporo’s attractions

4. To plan special exhibitions by cooperating with private galleries and related organizations.

5. To develop media arts
   As a city that has abundant resources such as an accumulation of creative industries and vocational schools for creators, Sapporo can act as a place where media arts – a new expression of art merging digital technologies and art – could develop.
About the General Plan of the Sapporo International Art Festival

When the Festival will be held

FY2013: A period of preparation and the implementation of pre-events to create momentum for the Festival
FY2014: The first Sapporo International Art Festival
*We plan to hold the Festival once every three years thereafter.

Length of the Festival period

Considering the balance of revenues and expenditures, we expect the event to last approximately 70 days.

April    May    June    July    August    September    October    November    December    January    February    March

- Sapporo Lilac Festival
- YOSAKOI Soran Festival
- Flower Festa
- Pacific Music Festival
- Sapporo Summer Festival
- Tanuki Festival
- Culture Night
- Sapporo City Jazz
- Susukino Festival
- Sapporo Art Stage (the event length to be adjusted)
- Sapporo Tapas
- Dai-Don-Den!
- Sapporo Autumn Fest
- Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market
- Sapporo Design Week
- Sapporo White Illumination
- Sapporo Chrysanthemum Festival
- German Christmas Market in Sapporo
- Sapporo Snow Festival
- Snowscape Moere
- Sapporo II Project

About the executive committee

Creative City Sapporo International Art Festival Executive Committee was created under an industry-university-government-citizen partnership, with its secretariat located in the newly established International Art Event Planning Department of the Sapporo Tourism & Cultural Affairs Bureau.
About the Guest Director of the Sapporo International Art Festival

Reasons for Appointing Ryuichi Sakamoto as Guest Director

• Compatibility with the Basic Concept of the General Plan – City and Nature

Over the past decade, Mr. Sakamoto has put life first and engaged in a range of social contributions generally compatible with the Basic Concept of the Sapporo International Art Festival General Plan – City and Nature. To be more specific, he established *more trees*, a global initiative to support the planting of trees. Also in Hokkaido, since 2009 he has promoted a carbon offset initiative in collaboration with a cooperative organization named *4Rest*, which promotes forest resources for energy sustainable towns, in Shimokawa and three other towns.

Nobody knows for sure what is going to happen to the world in 2014. The international situation is increasingly tense. We believe that if Sapporo is indifferent to major global and local issues and continues to hold only traditional forms of contemporary art exhibitions, people will show no interest in the city.

• Connection with the event development focusing on media arts, on the assumption that Sapporo will join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

In its efforts to promote its Creative City Sapporo initiative, the City of Sapporo strives to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which promotes exchanges between creative cities. The city plans to develop, a combined arts festival as part of the Sapporo International Art Festival that stresses features of media art, a new creative activities field of registration in the Network.

Mr. Sakamoto is a pioneer in media arts in Japan and is highly regarded worldwide for his many achievements including those at Ars Electronica, the world's largest media arts event (Linz, Austria), and at the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM).

In this way, and as Mr. Sakamoto’s profile (attachment) shows, he has the overall ability to oversee the International Art Festival as art director.

He is recognized worldwide for his activities in creating and popularizing art and culture, based on his thorough knowledge of contemporary art, music, performing arts, and media arts.

We believe he is the perfect person to embody the momentum of the Sapporo International Art Festival, the flagship project of the Creative City Sapporo initiative.
About the Guest Director of the Sapporo International Art Festival

On the occasion of Ryuichi Sakamoto’s Inauguration as Guest Director

• Significance of the Sapporo International Art Festival

As a city inaugurating an international art festival somewhat later than other cities in Japan, we believe it necessary to hold the event with a focus on how those involved in contemporary art can tackle the urban and environmental challenges of the 21st century, rather than on promoting regional revitalization and producing positive economic effects through contemporary art exhibitions.

Recent challenges – including Japan’s dwindling population, the global economic crisis, and the depletion of energy resources, as well as the March 2011 natural disaster and the nuclear accident – have revealed a myriad of problems. Under these circumstances, the theme of the Art Festival to be held two years from now is of paramount importance. We believe contemporary art not only serves as the pillar of art and culture and of the creative economy, but it also plays a public role in meeting the social and moral demands of future generations.

• What is expected of the guest director

The guest director will supervise the Sapporo International Art Festival as a whole. He will infuse new ideas and global perspectives into the event, organizing the main exhibition as well as selecting a curator to cooperate in the endeavor. He will also plan local art projects that involve local artists and residents, and develop other related projects.

We have asked Mr. Sakamoto to announce the theme and message of the event, with a focus on how people in Sapporo and those involved in contemporary art can tackle global challenges and how creativity in contemporary art can help contribute to the future society.

Exhibition spaces for the latest contemporary art that incorporates various genres, such as performing arts, media arts, screen images and contemporary music, will later be organized based on this theme and message.

• The role of the City of Sapporo

The City of Sapporo will collaborate with the organizers of existing local art and culture programs. It will plan the festival from a comprehensive perspective by exploring the potential of Sapporo/Hokkaido, such as its food, agricultural and creative industries as well as indigenous culture, as part of the festival’s peripheral projects.

We believe the Sapporo International Art Festival will be brought to life through artists’ contributions in response to Mr. Sakamoto’s inspiration on a social and global level in his role as guest director and through residents’ participation in local activities.