

Cultural Policies of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government

The city of Tokyo functions as a major cultural hub of both present-day Asia and the wider world. At the same time, it has a proud collection of precious cultural heritage rooted in its traditions and history dating back to the Edo period (1603-1867). Tokyo also serves as a major focal point for many of the world's most celebrated and illustrious artists to avail themselves of the very latest in artistic trends, and as a platform for the launching of a diverse array of arts ranging from traditional to audio-visual arts.

Convinced that utilising the cultural resources of the metropolis and creating and disseminating culture from Tokyo should play crucial roles in the development of the city, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) has developed comprehensive policies aimed at the promotion of culture and the arts.

Section 1:

Cultural Facilities of TMG (operation of museums and theatres)

To preserve the historic legacies of Edo-Tokyo and create and disseminate cultures unique to the city, TMG operates a number of museums and theatres.

1. Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum

The museum seeks to provide visitors with a virtual experience of 400 years of Edo-Tokyo culture. Through numerous and sometimes life-sized replicas representing the changes in lifestyles, architecture and cityscapes, visitors can experience the space and time that has nurtured the city's culture.

Recent major exhibitions: *Soichiro Honda and Masaru Ibuka – Dream and Creation*, *Shinsen-gumi Exhibition*, *Japanese Archipelago Unearthed 2004*

2. Open Air Architectural Museum (affiliated to Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum)

This open air cultural space features reconstructed and reassembled architectural structures that have played crucial roles in the development of the history and culture of Tokyo.

3. Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Since its inception, this museum has devoted itself to holding exhibitions ranging from contemporary arts, designs and architectural structures to fashions and animations that represent vivid aspects of today's world. The museum is chaired by Seiichiro Ujiie, Chairperson of Nippon Television (NTV) Corporate Network and a leading figure in the Japanese media.

Recent major exhibitions: Yoko Ono – *YES*, Picasso – *Body and Eros*, Issay Miyake – *Making Things*, Ikko Tanaka in *Retrospective*, Luis Barragan – *The Quiet Revolution*, *Ghibli All Over – Studio Ghibli Three-dimensional Exhibition*, ARTEDINAMICA – *Ferrari & Maserati*

4. Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography

This is Japan's first museum dedicated solely to photographic and video images. It also holds selected film screenings. The museum director is Yoshiharu Fukuhara, Honorary Chairperson of Shiseido and a central figure in corporate philanthropic activities in Japan.

Recent major exhibitions: *The Shirakawa Yoshikazu Exhibition*, *Japan Media Arts Festival by the Agency for Cultural Affairs*, *Exhibition of Level-X TV Games – 20th Anniversary of the Family Computer*

5. Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Founded in 1926, this museum is located in Tokyo's Ueno Park, where a large number of the city's major museums and theatres are concentrated. Since its opening, the museum has been very popular among citizens as a venue for public exhibitions by nationally and internationally renowned fine arts organizations.

Recent major exhibitions: *Glorious Dutch and Flemish Paintings Exhibition*, *Civilisation of Ancient Sichuan – Treasures from Sanxingdui and Jinsha*, *the Japan Fine Arts Exhibition (Nitten)*, *NIKA Exhibition*, *Masterpieces from the Washington National Gallery of Arts*, *The Marmottan Monet Museum Exhibition Japan 2004*, *Treasures from the World's Cultures: the British Museum after 250 years*

6. Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum

A former residence of the family of Prince Asaka, this combination of Art Deco house and vast garden of fresh greenery, exemplary of the finest palace architecture, is today put to use as an art exhibition space. Exhibitions ranging from western paintings to decorative art make effective use of the gracious atmosphere of this architectural space.

Recent major exhibitions: *Caravaggio – Master of Light and Shadow*, *Puiforcat Exhibition: History of French Silverware*, *Marie Laurencin Retrospective Exhibition*, and *400-years History of European Jewellery: from Renaissance to Art Deco*

7. Tokyo Bunka Kaikan

Also situated in Ueno Park, the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan is Japan's most prestigious concert hall and hosts numerous music and performing arts activities. The history of the hall is a veritable history of modern musical activities in Japan, staging performances from many of the world's most respected orchestras and opera companies. The hall has received high acclaim for the quality of its acoustics from both domestic and international performers. *Tokyo Opera no-Mori*, a major opera project led by musical director, Seiji Ozawa, will be launched here in March this year. The facility's director is Norio Ohga, the former chairman of Sony Corporation who played an instrumental role in the expansion of Sony to a major player in the global media business. Ohga is also a singer and conductor.

8. Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space

This art space houses a main hall with excellent acoustic reverberations and the world's largest pipe organ. The facility is a theatrical complex of various spaces, including a medium-sized hall, which is very popular for musicals, small halls equipped for experimental plays, conference rooms and an exhibition gallery. It hosts a variety of performances from world-famous orchestras to popular musicals of Japan.

fig.1: Total Floor Area and Total Number of Visitors to Tokyo Metropolitan Museums in FY 2003

Facilities	Edo-Tokyo Museum	Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum	Museum of Photography	Museum of Contemporary Art	Art Museum	Teien Art Museum
Total Floor Area (m ²)	48,512	[Total Land Area] 70,832	7,500	33,515	31,984	2,100
Visitors (thousands)	1,586	360	413	692	3,111	230

Section 2: Major Cultural Projects of TMG

Heaven Artists

Street performers enrich the city, and the TMG has started a scheme to support street performers by granting them licenses as so-called “Heaven Artists.” This enables licensed artists to perform at various public and private facilities. The project defines spaces for their activities as “street theatres,” where art and culture can be nurtured through interaction between artists and spectators.

The term, “Heaven Artist,” was coined by Shintaro Ishihara, Governor of Tokyo, reflecting a Japanese term for pedestrian precinct, *Hokosha Tengoku*, the literal English translation of which is pedestrians’ heaven.

At present, a total of 274 registered groups comprising 214 performing acts and 60 musical acts regularly perform at 58 venues in 46 facilities, including metropolitan parks, cultural amenities, private facilities, subway stations, etc., which have been made available to them.

The Heaven Artists TOKYO 2003 extravaganza was visited by approximately 150,000 people. Other events taking place at designated facilities saw some 110,000 visitors to the Shibuya area, 20,000 to Akihabara, 400,000 to Ginza, and 340,000 to Shinjuku. This summer, the TMG is planning to send a delegation of the artists to perform at the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan. A splendid time is guaranteed for all!!

Street Painting

This project provides up-and-coming young artists with new opportunities for self-expression by making walls of TMG facilities available for them to paint on. It also aims to expand artistic space within the metropolis to promote public art (contribution to the improvement of the urban environment by artistic utilisation of public space).

The project kicked off in 2004 with five mural paintings of 3m x 8m each at the entrance to the Roppongi Tunnel in Minato Ward by five different artists. This year, paintings by Japanese and German artists collaborating with Tokyo Wonder Site are planned for exhibition in Tokyo's premier public space, Yoyogi Park.

Tokyo Wonder Wall

Through the initiative of Governor Ishihara, himself an artist of no small repute, the Tokyo Wonder Wall was launched to provide young artists with opportunities to showcase their works. The project seeks to enhance Tokyo's cultural magnetism and to encourage the interaction of citizens and young artists.

In addition to the exhibitions of works of about 100 selected competitors at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, the project provides 12 selected artists the opportunity to hold a one-month exhibition in the main connecting corridor from the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Hall to the main buildings of TMG. This corridor is also open to the public.

Since 2004, the eligibility of competitors has been expanded from the residents of Tokyo to encompass the whole of Japan. In 2004, this resulted in a total of 925 entries to the competition, of which 102 were successful.

Tokyo Wonder Site

The site was opened in 2001 as a base for the fostering of up-and-coming young artists, the dissemination of new arts and the development of multidisciplinary artistic collaborations. The site holds and supports exhibitions by young artists; organises such cultural projects as concerts and lectures which introduce internationally active artists; operates workshops and exchange programs among artists as well as between artists and experts in other fields; and runs artist-in-residence programmes. Preparations for the opening of a new site are currently underway in the Shibuya area—one of the main cultural centers of the metropolis. As well as housing a think-tank for the future cultural policies of Tokyo, the new site aims at establishing itself as a major venue for domestic and international artistic performances and as the experimental base for new and challenging artistic projects.

Asian Performing Arts Festival

This festival was established as a joint project under the auspices of the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 (ANMC21), which was launched in October 2001 by 12 major cities in Asia. The festival was formed on the basis of the following fundamental precepts: to foster mutual understanding and exchanges among citizens of the participating cities; create new performing arts; and act as an international showcase for Asian performing arts.

Main Performances of Previous Festivals:

- Tokyo, 2002 “Tokyo” choreographed by Akaji Maro and produced by Nobuyoshi Araki, “Shingigaku (ancient masked opera)” by Mannojo Nomura, “King Lear” by Contemporary Legend Theatre (Taipei), “Selected Traditional Kun Opera Masterpieces” by BeiFang Kunqu Opera Theatre (Beijing).
- Delhi, 2003 “Three Stages in the History of Tokyo Contemporary Dance” by Ko Murobushi, Mika Kurosawa and Takao Kawaguchi, “Legend of White Snake” by Beijing Peking-Opera Theatre.
- Hanoi, 2004 “Contemporary Legend Music” by Shuichi Hidano (Japanese drums), Masahiro Nitta (shamisen), Keisuke Doi (shakuhachi) and Akira Jimbo (drums), “Water Puppetry” by Thanglong Water Puppet Theatre (Hanoi), “Flow” by Taipei Dance Circle.

As the main organising body of the festival, the TMG provides a wide-range of support activities to the host cities and simultaneously attempts to stimulate artists from other participating cities by introducing cutting-edge performances from Japanese artists with a view to creating and disseminating new forms of performing arts from Asia.

Tokyo Opera no-Mori (Tokyo Opera Forest)

Tokyo Opera no-Mori will commence in March 2005 with the internationally renowned conductor, Seiji Ozawa, as its musical director. The name of the project was conceptualised from the abundant artistic activities and surrounding greenery in Ueno Park, the project location. The opera signifies a novel art and cultural program with wide international appeal. This year's main program is Richard Strauss's *Electra*, featuring Deborah Polaski in the title role, and Agnes Baltsa as *Klytemnestra*.

During the event, various tie-up projects will take place in and around the artistic area of Ueno, in which the organising body of the project and local residents will work hand in hand to promote the image of Tokyo as a cosmopolitan oasis enjoyed by visitors from far and wide.

Performing Arts for Children

In the past, the TMG has striven to provide children with opportunities to appreciate art. Since 2004, it has further enhanced these activities by running art workshops where children can deepen their experience of artistic and cultural themes. Last year's workshops included classical music, traditional performing arts and dramatic arts.

In the field of traditional performing arts, a program entitled, *Children's Noh Play Challenge* invited a living national treasure of Japan, Shonosuke Okura, to produce a play to give children an opportunity to learn about Noh theatre—a traditional Japanese cultural art and listed as one of UNESCO's first Intangible Cultural Heritages. By providing rare first-hand experiences on the country's traditional culture, the program seeks to foster and increase the attention spans of children, and enhance their understanding of a society that has long nurtured the power to symbolise the elements of the universe in a limited space in harmony with the concepts of etiquette

and morality, and to develop expressive creativity. This is far from being a mere art appreciation program, but strives to create a space in which pupils receive lessons from first-class professionals and publicly demonstrate their artistic achievements.

Tokyo Location Box (Filming Support Office)

The Tokyo Location Box was established in April 2001 as a general contact office for applications for filming permission, etc. with a view to facilitating location film shooting in the metropolis and to promote the vast array of Tokyo's attractions through the medium of films and TV dramas. Thus far, it has supported a number of films, including *Kill Bill* directed by Quentin Tarantino, *WASABI* by Luc Besson, and *The Grudge* by Takashi Shimizu. Support of domestic films includes *Blood and Bone* directed by Yoichi Sai and starring Takeshi Kitano.

Tokyo International Film Festival

As one of the largest film festivals in Asia, this project aspires to contribute to the development of the film industry and promotion of international cultural exchanges. The TMG co-organises the competition section as the host city and awards the Governor of Tokyo Prize to works that receive the Tokyo Grand Prix Award.

The competition held in 2004 attracted 310 entries from 59 different countries and regions, among which *Whisky* from Uruguay, co-directed by Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll, received the Grand Prix. The jury was chaired by Japanese film director, Yoji Yamada.

Short Shorts Film Festival Asia

The TMG co-organises Asia's largest short film festival with the aim of providing support to aspiring young filmmakers. The TMG also hopes to further foster the film industry and publicise the potential of the genre of the short film as a composite art form. The inaugural festival in 2004 saw 412 entries from 15 countries and regions. The event was produced by actor Tetsuya Bessho, with Taka Ichise as president of the selection panel.

Tokyo International Anime Fair

This fair has been held since 2002 to promote the world-acclaimed Japanese animation industry. The fair contains an exhibition section where numerous local and international companies display their latest creations, competitions by creators from all parts of the globe as well as various other events.

During the four-day festival in 2004, 166 companies from seven countries and regions, including five from the Asian region, participated in the event. *Mobile Suit Gundam SEED*, directed by Mitsuo Fukuda, and *Africa a.F.r.I.c.A* by Korean director, Tae-Ho Han were among the prize winners.

Tokyo Art Index

This is a portal site designed to support the activities of artists and promote the appeal of Tokyo's art and culture. Latest information on exhibitions and performances are constantly updated, and the site allows artists, artistic organisations and cultural facilities to publicise their forthcoming activities. The page also provides useful information for artists, such as grants, subsidies, competitions, etc.

(Number of site visits in FY 2003: 642,458)

URL: <http://www.artindex.metro.tokyo.jp>