

## **Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter**

### **No. 40 Two exhibitions in Sydney: The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japanese sculpture**

31 May 2021

In Sydney, COVID-19 measures have been very successful, and recently, one after the other, large-scale events have started to be held.

On 20 May, I attended opening events of two exhibitions that have a Japanese theme and was fortunate to speak at both. One exhibition was "War and Peace: The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" at the Australian National Maritime Museum; the other was "Sculpture Rocks: An exhibition of sculpture by Japanese artists" at Campbells Cove in The Rocks.

Being held at prominent locations in Sydney, both exhibitions are wonderful opportunities to raise the profile of Japan locally. In this issue of my newsletter, as I describe the opening events of both exhibitions, I would like to reflect on the significance of Japanese cultural events held in Australia.



The banner advertising the War and Peace exhibition at the entrance of the Australian National Maritime Museum (20 May 2021)

- **Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing exhibition**

At the Australian National Maritime Museum in Pyrmont, inner Sydney, the exhibition “War and Peace: The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” is running from 21 May until 29 August, displaying items on loan from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The exhibition received support from the “USA Bicentennial Gift Fund” and was the final event planned by the Australian National Maritime Museum as part of its “War and Peace in the Pacific 75” educational program. Due to COVID-19, it was postponed from last year which was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war.

This educational program included a study tour by students from Japan, Australia and the US. The students travelled around the United States in 2018, and in December 2019, they visited Tokyo and Hiroshima as well as other places in Japan. The plan was that they would visit Australia last year, but unfortunately, it was cancelled due to COVID-19.

The current exhibition has a focus on educating the younger generation, and already many high schools have made plans to visit the exhibition and listen to talks as part of their studies.



**Delivering my remarks at the opening of “War and Peace”  
– on the screen, Hiroshima survivor Ms Kajimoto Yoshiko  
(20 May 2021)**

The exhibition’s opening event began with an explanation about the background and purpose of the exhibition by Mr Kevin Sumption, Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum. He was followed by Mr Takigawa Takuo, Director of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, who participated online, expressing his desire to convey the misery of nuclear weapons to the world’s leaders while seeking cooperation on realising the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Then, there was an eyewitness testimony by Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor, Ms Kajimoto Yoshiko (90), about her experiences of the bombing. At the time, Ms Kajimoto was 14 years old. Her father spent three days looking for his daughter before he could find her. He would die a year and a half later from the effects of the atomic bombing. Her mother suffered from atomic bomb disease (radiation illness) for 20 years before her death. Ms Kajimoto herself was diagnosed with stomach

cancer in 1999 and had to have two thirds of her stomach removed. Students from her year level are now suffering from cancer and leukemia.

In my remarks, I conveyed that it is essential to reconcile the different positions countries have on nuclear weapons and that Japan will continue to make substantial contributions towards the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Further, I emphasised that Japan-Australia cooperation is important not only to this end, but also to dealing with new threats such as COVID and climate change, and to realising a free and open Indo-Pacific.



**Looking at items in the exhibition with Mr Kevin Sumption, Director of the Australian National Maritime Museum [left], and Ms Sharon Hudson-Dean, Consul-General of the United States (20 May 2021)**

Also speaking at the opening was Ms Sharon Hudson-Dean, Consul-General of the United States. She explained the latest developments including President Biden's statement in August last year regarding the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the recent extension of the US-Russia New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START).

After the opening event, the Museum Director showed me around the exhibition. It begins with messages from the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities. Items on display include photos and pictures of the many people killed and injured by the atomic bombings, clothing worn by children at the time, a bento lunch box melted by the heat and a watch stopped at 8:15 in the morning. They vividly tell of the misery of the atomic bombings.

Also on display is the origami crane that President Obama folded in 2016 on his visit to Hiroshima, conveying the message of reconciliation between Japan and the United States.

More than 75 years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, here in Sydney, I felt for myself the devastating impact of nuclear weapons and renewed my determination to work for peace.



The guided tour at the opening of “Sculpture Rocks”  
(20 May 2021)

- **Exhibition of Japanese sculpture**

In central Sydney, close to both the Opera House and Harbour Bridge at Campbells Cove in The Rocks, “Sculpture Rocks: sculpture by Japanese artists” is being held from 20 May to 3 June. On the first day, there was a media briefing attended by NSW Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Don Harwin MLC, and it attracted extensive coverage by the major local media.

The exhibition was planned and organised by Sculpture by the Sea. Since 1997 for more than 20 years, Sculpture by the Sea has presented an exhibition of sculpture along the coastal walk from Bondi Beach to Tamarama Beach (Sydney) and it is now one of Sydney’s annual events. However, due to the effects of COVID-19, last year the event had to be cancelled, and instead, a smaller-scale event that would have a big impact was planned, and that led to the current exhibition in The Rocks.



**At the weekend guided tour and lunch for “Sculpture Rocks”  
- with Ms Saito Ayako, Mr Ishino Koichi and Mr Kamada Akira  
(23 May 2021)**

The reason behind the choice of sculptures by Japanese artists for the exhibition at The Rocks lies in the strong connection Japanese sculptors have had with Sculpture by the Sea over many years. A Japanese sculptor, Mr Ushio Keizo, has taken part from the early years of the event. Since 1999, he has not only entered works ever year, but also encouraged other Japanese sculptors to participate and arranged transportation between Japan and Australia. As the years passed, many Japanese sculptors entered Sculpture by the Sea, and some of them even decided to migrate to Australia. Many of the works by Japanese artists are made of heavy materials such as granite and their weight makes them suitable to display in The Rocks area. There were also a good number of works to exhibit. This is why Japan was selected as the theme.

In this exhibition, there are 18 works by 14 Japanese artists. Among them, three artists live around Sydney and I had the opportunity to meet and talk with them – Mr Ishino Koichi, Mr Kamada Akira and Ms Saito Ayako. Mr Kamada has lived here for more than 30 years, Ms Saito learnt sculpture here, and Mr Ishino learnt about Australia and decided to move here because of Sculpture by the Sea.



**At the weekend guided tour and lunch for “Sculpture Rocks” –  
from left: me, the current, immediate past and founding chairs of “Sculpture by  
the Sea” and the founding director of the same  
(23 May 2021)**

I was fortunate to be invited to participate in the exhibition’s opening reception (20 May) and in the weekend guided tour and lunch (23 May).

In my remarks at the opening reception, in addition to explaining the long years of strong ties between Sculpture by the Sea and Japanese sculptors, I spoke about how it was not only Japanese sculpture that has been accepted in this way. Japanese cuisine, tourism, and many other aspects of Japanese culture have been warmly embraced. I explained that I feel this warm embrace of other cultures stemming from Australian multiculturalism is one of Australia’s great strengths.

During the guided tour and lunch, I met many of Sculpture by the Sea’s supporters including all the chairs of the organisation’s board, and I realised that art gives rise to various encounters across different fields.





Work by Japanese sculptor, Mr Yamasaki Tetsuro  
(23 May 2021)

● **Cultural and media events enhancing Japan's presence**

By participating in events related to these two exhibitions, I understood the significant role that large-scale Japan-themed events play in increasing the presence of Japan. The exhibition about the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing runs until 29 August and the Japanese sculpture exhibition runs until 3 June. I hope you may have the opportunity to go and see them for yourselves.

Furthermore, preparations are steadily progressing to hold "Japanaroo 2021" from 20 to 29 August. Japanaroo 2021 is planned to be held mainly here in Sydney. In early June, the logo will be announced, and in July, the website will go live (TBC). Tickets are already on sale for the opening gala which will celebrate Japan and Australia "in the spirit of Japan and the First Nations". So, looking ahead, I intend to do my best to further promote mutual understanding and cooperation between Japan and Australia through this Japanaroo 2021 initiative.

War and Peace: The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

<https://www.sea.museum/whats-on/exhibitions/war-and-peace>

Sculpture Rocks: sculpture by Japanese artists

<https://sculpturebythesea.com/exhibitions/sculpturerocks/>

<https://www.facebook.com/sculpturebythesea>

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