



The character of Shibuya's streets and vibrant people are delineated here in Honda Masaharu's *Shibuya no machinami*.

The City Open to the Arts — for All

Tokyo is expanding access to arts and culture, with the Art Brut 2022 Touring Exhibition “Form, Fluid, and Flexible.”

by Jordan A. Y. Smith

During the summer of 2022, in the modern, bustling, cultural hub of Shibuya, art enthusiasts and casual tourists could be lucky enough to encounter artists whose work is of the “art brut” genre. Works included Honda Masaharu's *Shibuya no machinami* depicting the lively, tessellated, pastiche of buildings and people in motion, a collaborative live painting on canvas carried out with general participants in a workshop prior to the exhibition. Some works, such as the

sculptures of Hagio Toshio, used flyers stuck together with cellophane tape to create fantastical creatures, recalling Japan's legacy of *kaiju* giant monster movies.

These works were some of the many highlights of the Art Brut 2022 Touring Exhibition, “Form, Fluid, and Flexible” at Tokyo Shibuya Koen-dori Gallery. The exhibition traveled from Shibuya to two other venues in Tokyo.

“The mission of the gallery is to help extend the

rising awareness of the existence of individuals with diverse backgrounds and to encourage interaction and communication between everyone,” the curators said. Exciting new perceptions of the world can be arrived at by coming into contact with the diverse sensibilities of people with intellectual or perceptual impairments. Similarly, “There is an interest from the hearing impaired regarding the audible world, and an interest among the visually impaired in what ‘seeing’ actually is. Art brut fosters particular awareness of the diversity and beauty in the ways the world is perceived, and images are created.”

The works were chosen for their relation to the primary theme: *form*. This simple word has a stunning variety of meanings—objects with material form, and also for things with no material form, such as relationships. All the art on display, which were contributed from around Japan, could be classified as art brut, a term that embraces the works of artists who have not undergone specialized art education and who have an independent approach to creativity and free-ranging styles and techniques. The show created opportunities for visitors of all backgrounds to enjoy art and artists they would not

The fascinating art objects of Hagio Toshio seem like they will come alive at any moment.



Both participants and audience were enthralled, thoroughly enjoying the heartwarming Conference opening performance.



normally have the chance to encounter, and appreciate the widest possible array of creativity in relaxed and familiar settings.

Around the same time, the International Conference on Open Access to Culture: Creative Well-being Tokyo 2022 was being held in Ueno Park, the northeast Tokyo oasis of greenery, arts, and culture. Conferences, showcases, short-term intensive camps, and networking featured specialists, organizations, and creators who are leading the way toward making a truly accessible art culture in the world. The kickoff performance took place in the open-air plaza of the park. It began with a lively, modern twist on the *shishi-mai*, or lion dance, and a variety of choreographed and semi-improvisational presentations showcasing a large cast of performers, including some with full range of motion, others incorporating their wheelchairs into the dance, and those hard of hearing enticing the crowd to feel rhythm in different ways. The event ended with the cast inviting the audience to join in the revelry, giving a lively flair and truly inclusive atmosphere to the event.

The legacy brought about by the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 is steadily being further strengthened. Tokyo's inclusive, open environment and vibrant arts programs make for a palpable community vibe. The events were organized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture, who continue to promote various initiatives with the aim of realizing a city that is dynamic in the arts and culture.