



"The winter moon"
by Kokona Nakamura



"My Sunflower, Summer Mosaic"
by Neo Ichikawa

Students with Special Needs Showcase Their Talents

Every year the Art Project Exhibition and Art Caravan Exhibition display a delightful selection of artworks by students from special needs schools.



"TAKOYAKI PARTY"
by Taisei Yamamoto



"Under the Ocean, Multicolor Colors of Light"
by Kenji Kamikura



"The pyramid of Giza"
by Yuto Suehiro

Celebrating the artistic talents of students enrolled at schools for special needs education in Tokyo, the Art Project Exhibition, followed by the Art Caravan Exhibition, are two wonderful events that continue to grow bigger and better with each year that passes. Both exhibitions provide the general public with a fantastic opportunity to witness some amazing pieces of work by these children, showing that when it comes to art there really are no barriers.

The 4th Art Project Exhibition took place from December 5-19, 2018 at Itochu Aoyama Art Square, in the heart of one of Tokyo's trendiest districts. Building on the success of the previous event another big crowd turned out for the exhibition. Those who missed the joyous occasion need not despair. There is an opportunity to see some of the displayed artwork at other destinations around Tokyo as part of the Art Caravan Exhibition that tours the city.

As with the 2018 edition the theme this time was "To the Future—Colors and Shapes that Move the Heart." 50 pieces were selected from over 950 applications—the highest ever number of applicants and a number that has more than doubled since the event was first held. The majority of works on display were paintings and prints, though there were also over 10 three-dimensional pieces including some ceramics, sculptures, and paper models, as well as photographs and calligraphy.

The original creations, selected by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Board of Education, came from elementary school, junior high school, and high school students, all who have special physical or intellectual needs. The main goal of the exhibition is to showcase the artistic flair of these students and demonstrate what they are able to accomplish when given the opportunity.

Over the past few years, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Board of Education, working closely with a local art university, has been extremely proactive when it comes to promoting art education programs at special

needs schools. With an emphasis on self-expression, its initiatives have helped build confidence and increased motivation amongst the pupils. This, in turn, has had a positive effect in other classes, helping to develop technical and inventive thinking skills.

As well as having a lot of fun, the students are also realizing their artistic potential. Those selected for the Art Project Exhibition and Art Caravan Exhibition have a great platform to show the Tokyo public their true capabilities. As their self-esteem grows, they are more likely to apply again for the competition in the future.

The joy on the faces of students who are chosen to participate in the exhibition is a heart-warming sight. It is also a very special moment for the teachers and parents as they see the hard work and dedication of their students and children being rewarded. "I had never experienced seeing my son's work on display like that before," said one parent at last year's exhibition. "It just made me so happy. The artwork of the other children was wonderful as well. I'm really glad I came to see it."

Members of the general public were equally impressed, with one person describing the event as "soul-stirring." Another visitor spoke about the students' "freedom of thought and expression," adding, "I was amazed by their skills and technique. I hope they can find an environment to further nurture their talents in the future."

The feedback was all very positive. Many of these visitors come back again and again, while the exhibitions also welcome new crowds each year. The popularity of the Art Project Exhibition and the Art Caravan Exhibition is growing all the time and there are now talks about expanding the number of works on display in the future.

As one of the world's greatest cities gears up for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, expect more innovative and awe-inspiring events like these being staged in Tokyo.